

The Judgment Throne of Christ

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the Bride of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those men and women, my brothers and sisters, who thirst for the Lord and his righteousness. Those saints that have abandoned themselves to live for him and him alone.

For this purpose we received salvation, that we would approach the judgment throne of Christ as priests of mercy and forgiveness. And as priests, in union with our High Priest Christ Jesus, we turn wicked men from darkness to God.

For this purpose he gave teachers and preachers and spiritual fathers, to bring the people to completion in Christ Jesus, for the glory of God.

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	vii
Introduction.....	8
Seven Years	9
God's Seed.....	12
Mrs. Catherine Booth.....	16
The Throne Room.....	20
Abraham's Covenant	22
Exodus	23
Crisis in the Wilderness	26
Altar of Sacrifice.....	28
The Cross.....	31
40 Days.....	33
Death of an Alcoholic	35
Crossing the River Jordan.....	37
Seven Works of God.....	41
Conformed to His Image.....	44
God's Church.....	47
Miss Heaven by 18 inches.....	49
Gift of Healing.....	50
All Glory to God.....	53

Stand in the Gap	55
Works of the Righteous	58
George Mueller's Fog.....	60
Homeless in NY	63
Tommy Titcombe	65
The Day of Judgment.....	69
Judge Not, Love Much	73
The Plan of Grace	76

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A special thank you to my dear wife and children for their support and attending Bible Study every Sunday.

And finally a thank you to the late Pastor Paris Reidhead who has been my spiritual teacher and mentor as I run my course here on earth.

Introduction

The Judgment Throne of Christ, by the title alone one might assume this book describes that Day which is both jubilation and horror. And there is that aspect to consider. The Day of Judgment invokes visions of awe, fear and trembling. Jubilation for the blessed ones and eternal damnation for the unrepentant. However, this book is not about that Day, but about now, today.

It is here in the throne room of Christ the blessed ones find their purpose and calling. And blessed is the soul in union with Christ Jesus. For here the voice of God will utter those precious words, “Well done my good and faithful servant.” (Matthew 25:21). This is the place where wisdom is before us, no longer a mystery but a delight to behold. Where the redeemed are watered, prayers are answered and blessings flow.

Glory to God and Halleluiah, will be thy shout.
Glory to God and Halleluiah comes from my mouth.
Praise to God my redeemer and Lord.
Nothing more to say, but the story I lay down,
for I have poured myself out.

Seven Years

The Judgment Throne of Christ has taken seven years to write, not because of its length or volume, but seven years because the Lord wanted a witness. He wanted a testimony that God's Word is forever true. The Lord wanted a man so abandoned he would go into the wilderness and meet God face to face. And then that man would turn to his people and say, "Thus saith the Lord." *The Judgment Throne of Christ* is a book, yes, but more than text printed on a page, it is a witness of power and truth.

It was seven years ago on August 23, 2007 when I met the living God. And in those seven years since I would awake to changes. Something wonderful yet strange was happening to my mind and body. I sought the Scripture for answers and found this: "So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord-- who is the Spirit--makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image." (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The promise God makes to every believer was coming alive, in me. I was being molded,

refined, purged and pruned into the image of Jesus Christ.

Out of my mouth would come praises, prayers, and prose to the glory of God. I couldn't contain the Spirit that was turning me inside out. And soon thereafter, I knew the Lord had a purpose for me. There was something he wanted me to say; somewhere he wanted me to go. But where, I did not know. So like an orphan seeking a home I thought surely the house of the Lord is for me. There I would find my purpose and reality. Alas, it wasn't to be. While there was a church on every corner that claimed the truth, they were filled with people who didn't resemble the Truth. I was now in a ball of confusion.

The world of religion was like a pool of water stretched from shore to shore. But when the sun up high shines on waters you see a reflection. Yet here I was, being conformed to the image of Christ, reflecting the Son, in the midst of waters without the Son. And as the Lord opened my eyes it seemed there was a cost to following the Lord Jesus. There was a cost to be a true Christian, the redeemed of God. Some folks had a testimony while others had none. Yet all claimed the banner of Christ and called his

name. How could this be? I felt like a man in a strange land.

While grace and mercy freely gave the gift of eternal life there was a cost, a sacrifice the believer had to make to follow Christ. “Those who would follow me must eat my flesh and drink my blood,” (John 6:54 paraphrased) the Lord told his followers. And when he said this many just visualized a cannibal feast. This is a hard saying many of these professing Christians said, and upon hearing the cost of following Christ, “... many of these disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” (John 6:66).

God's Seed

Lord, am I different, am I the strange one? Is all as it should be in the house of the Lord? Am I a pebble making small ripples, a disruption in a pool of tranquility, this sea of religion? Please Lord, give me answers, I must know. Who is a true Christian? If I am to be a minister dear Lord, I need to know, "Who is on the Lord's side?" What is the evidence of salvation? Where is the church of the Lord? For three years the Lord never answered my question.

Then one Sunday night, in December 2010, I returned home to Massachusetts from a trip to New York City. I had visited Times Square Church and the sermon that day was a message on the Cross, from Pastor Carter Conlon. It was near midnight and I was sitting in my office, eyes closed, meditating on the message. Then suddenly my breath was taken away. I felt an immense weight on my chest and gasped for air. The profound depth of the love of Jesus Christ began to weigh on me. A strange thing this was. As I felt the great weight of the love of our Lord pressing on my chest, leaving me breathless, it was as if I looked to the side and saw the Lord weeping, a man of sorrows and

grief. And in that moment the burden of Jesus Christ was placed on my heart.

I burst into tears, crossed my arms and clutched my sides. My body was shaking as I wept, and wept. As the burden and mourning of Christ came upon me I cried out, "Mercy Lord!" for those I saw perishing. First my sister, then other names and faces came to me and I cried out "Mercy dear Lord, mercy dear Lord." At the same time the Lord shared his burden, when he shared his heart, a revelation came. He showed me the spiritual mark on the redeemed, his church. (Ezekiel 9:4).

He said, in my heart, the man or woman who has the seed of Christ is the redeemed. The man or woman who has the heart of Jesus is the pillar of my church. The man or woman that has had a miracle happen; no less a miracle than the virgin birth, is the blessed one. The Spirit of the Lord has put the seed of Christ, the living God, in all that are his and sealed them for that Day. This is the mark of the Lamb that causes the Angel of Death to pass over; the mark of eternal life.

Then I saw the church of Christ was not the building on the corner, with the steeple, pews and pulpit, but a spiritual temple built of

transformed lives. One here, two there, scattered afar, but united in God.

The house of the Lord I found not in a building, but in the spirits of men and women knitted together by the Spirit of God. It was in these lives I found my purpose and calling. It was through these the Lord spoke to me again and again.

Then I said, “Ah dear Lord now I see.” The time has come when true worshipers will neither worship in that building or that place, but will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth. (John 4:21-23).

For many will come dressed as the sheep of God, with signs and wonders, in pulpits and pews. (Matthew 7:15, 24:24). Under a steeple they sit, but over the pit they stand. False teachers they are called, pastors and preachers. (2 Corinthians 11:15). The deceived and deceiver, leading astray the fool, the orthodox and the counterfeit believer. But the one thing the Devil and his horde cannot counterfeit or fake is the heart of Christ.

Thus the Lord said, “By this all people will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35). The Lord here speaks of a deep-seated spiritual love born of

the Spirit. And who can love a brother in Christ but the one with the heart of Christ. Not his own heart, for the Scriptures say the heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked, who can know it but the Lord. (Jeremiah 17:9). Has this miracle of union with the Spirit of Christ happened to you? Is there evidence the heart of Jesus is in you?

“No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.” (1 John 3:9).

Mrs. Catherine Booth

The only way the Lord could save you and I was to put Christ in us, so we become what he is before a Holy God; pure and undefiled. He did this so “He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.” (Ephesians 5:27).

And no greater illustration or story can I give of “Christ in us” than that of Mrs. Catherine Booth, the wife of William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army of Jesus Christ. The story takes place in the middle 1800s, in the United Kingdom. Mrs. Booth, a worker for the Salvation Army, had petitioned the state to preach the Gospel in a women’s prison. But this wasn’t normal, this hadn’t been done. Why, prison was no place for a proper woman, especially one with social standing. What was she thinking, the authorities wondered? Without waver Mrs. Booth insisted and the petition was granted. Once there, she began sharing the Word from cell to cell. Then one woman, at the end of the prison corridor, began cursing. She cursed Mrs. Booth and cursed the name of God. Vile and filthy things spewed for all to hear.

Mrs. Booth couldn't see the woman because her cell had a wall, so she asked to go down the corridor. The prison guards tried to dissuade her, saying the woman was horribly disfigured and was offensive to see. In fact, they had put up the wall so she could be hidden from view.

Undaunted, Mrs. Booth headed down the corridor and approached the cell. She then faced the woman and said, "The Lord loves you." The woman responded, "If God loves me then kiss me."

With tears streaming down her cheeks Mrs. Booth reached through the prison bars, held the woman's face and kissed her. Then the woman reeled back and cried out, "Now I know there is a God, because no one has ever kissed me, except my mother!"

But let me tell you the rest of the story. And I know it by the grace of God. When Mrs. Booth approached the prison cell and saw the woman, her body cringed. The woman was offensive to human sight and senses. She was rejected by the flesh of men, all that comprises human personality and prejudice. Tension arose in her gut, and Mrs. Booth's mind and body said "Don't go." But something deep within her said "Go." As she raised her hands to the bars of the

cell, to hold the woman, something happened. An unnatural calm and peace flooded her body that could not be explained by human reason. The feeling of revulsion disappeared, the spirit of offense and loathing was gone. And as she held the woman's face in her hands and kissed her, the Spirit of God poured out from her soul.

The tears coming down Mrs. Booth's cheeks were not tears of pity, but the well of Living Water, he who is acquainted with our grief. Through his anointed vessel the Lord Jesus kissed this woman. Then she who received the kiss could say "Glory to God, who gives strength and comfort to the weak." And Mrs. Booth could say "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service." (1 Timothy 1:12). Two women, a sheep and a shepherd, praised God that day. One received strength to do God's will and the other revealed God's love.

How do we know this was a work of God and not a ministry of man? We know because the Gospel did not come in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

Before that day Mrs. Booth had been to the throne room of Christ. She had been to the mercy seat, broken in spirit, and covered in God's strength. And as the Good Shepherd heard the cries of his lost sheep, he called one who had become a vessel for the Lord Jesus. A woman whose faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:5).

The Throne Room

The throne room of Christ isn't a physical room but a metaphor for the expanse of God's mercy and will from Genesis to Revelation. It begins in the Garden of Eden, with our parents Adam and Eve. Here we have a picture of the first children of God, given life from dust. Man was called good, and clean, and pure. Then man sinned. And something happened that forever changed the course of history. When the forbidden fruit was consumed by our parents their very nature changed. What was once pure became corrupt. Corruption would then lead to envy, murder and deceit. First in Cain then in every generation of mankind that followed. Adam and Eve had become child bearers for the Devil. For the Lord himself said of the Pharisees, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning." (John 8:44).

And again he says, "By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother." (1 John 3:10).

The clean and the unclean cannot co-exist in the throne room of God. The holy and the unholy are like day and night. When there is light shed abroad darkness flees. For a holy God to be righteous the unholy must be judged. And thus true to his nature our parents Adam and Eve are judged and the penalty is death for the human race. The Tree of Life was their destiny; everlasting life was to be theirs, but no more. The Lord casts them out of the Garden, and withdraws access to the Tree. Yet merciful, he casts them not out of his care and watchful eye.

What do we learn here? Adam walked with God and the Lord desired fellowship with man. We discover the Lord required perfect obedience from imperfect people. In man's temptation to be like God, he would now render his own judgment over good and evil, absent from the will of the Lord. (Genesis 3:5). Man would do his own pleasure, would turn to his own way rather than the way of the Lord. Adam had become a rebel, a challenger to deity. And the penalty for sin, the penalty for rebellion was death.

Abraham's Covenant

Now let's fast forward from the Garden to the covenant with Abraham. There is something I want you to see. In Genesis the Lord promised that through the offspring of Abraham the world would be blessed. But why Abraham? What did the Lord want to do that he could not through Adam?

In Genesis 18:19 the Lord says "For I have chosen him, [Abraham] that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."

It becomes clear that the judge of all the earth wants a righteous and faithful people. And out of their righteousness all God's blessings would flow. So it is here in the throne room where the plan of grace and the riches in Christ Jesus now unfold.

Exodus

Let's fast forward again, this time to Egypt. The children of Abraham had multiplied to hundreds of thousands, some say over two million. The Lord's promise to Abraham was about to be realized. The Lord God would have a righteous and faithful people. Repeatedly the Lord says to Pharaoh, "Let my people go so that they may worship me." (Exodus 7:16). Translations of the Hebrew for "worship" include "to labor as a slave or bondservant." Then Moses says to Pharaoh, "Let us go so that we may sacrifice to the Lord in the wilderness." (Exodus 8:27). Again the Lord says, "Let my people go so that they may honor me with a feast in the wilderness." (Exodus 5:1).

In Egypt the Lord proclaims his desire for a people that worship him. And worship would involve sacrifice and glory to God. The Lord would set apart a people that became bondservants; one who wholly gives himself up to God's will. This was righteousness. And this giving up of oneself would bring honor to God.

Exodus 19:6 – "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you

shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

This same proclamation is made to the church of Christ in Revelation 1:6; “...and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.”

The Greek definition for “priest” used in this verse is one who offers sacrifices, and is sacred because he belongs to the temple of God, devoted to God. And the sacrifice God desired was not sheep and goats.

“For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (Psalm 51:16-17).

The will of Adam, a rebel, by nature seeking to be a god in his own way, had to be broken. For our Lord Jesus said “Not my will but thine be done.” (Luke 22:42).

The purpose for the redeemed was now made clear. On their journey to the Promised Land the Israelites would become priests, ministers of the living God. They would place their will on

the altar of sacrifice to be broken and become wholly devoted to the Lord. Men, women and children, all would be ordained as priests of the living God, able to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24). Such a people would be his holy nation, a kingdom of priests.

But now we have a problem, a crisis about to unfold. The Israelites in their minds are being set free to escape the bondage of Egypt and to settle in a land that was their covenant inheritance. They were going to paradise, a prosperous land flowing with milk and honey.

Little did they know the Promised Land was a “Highway of Holiness,” and the “unclean will not travel on it.” (Isaiah 35:8). Only the righteous and consecrated could possess the land. And to be ordained the people would have to pass a trial of faith. A trial almost all would fail.

Crisis in the Wilderness

How often we meet people who think Christ died so they can escape Hell and go to Heaven. Yet the Lord says Christ died so that those that live (redeemed from death), would live for him - as bondservants, as priests unto the Most High. (2 Corinthians 5:15). Would the people enter God's rest? Yes, but as a byproduct not as the objective of redemption. And in the wilderness this issue comes to a boiling point. The trial of faith begins. The process of consecration for the worthy takes hold.

Moses, God's advocate, withdraws from the assembly for 40 days. The world would now see who was on the Lord's side.

“When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us.” (Exodus 32:1).

“And the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for

themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’ (Exodus 32:7)

Exodus 32:25. “And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “Who is on the Lord’s side? Come to me.” And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. And he said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.’ And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. And Moses said, “*Today you have been ordained for the service of the Lord, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.*”

Altar of Sacrifice

It was in the wilderness that the people's weakness in faith and commitment to God was exposed. The idols in their hearts were laid bare. Even though redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, there was a battle that had to be fought; a sacrifice that had to be made, a will that had to be broken.

In the wilderness the people on the Lord's side put to death the things closest to them; their sons, brothers, and neighbors.

In the wilderness the Christian must lay the thing dearest to his heart on the altar of sacrifice to become a priest of God. Here he must face his flesh and reckon himself crucified with Christ, (dead to self - Galatians 5:24) buried with Christ (dead to the world - Romans 6:24), and quickened with Christ (raised in new life - 2 Timothy 2:11). This is the trial of faith.

Called the spiritual father of those who have faith (Romans 4:11) Abraham placed Isaac, the son he loved, the thing dearest to him, on the altar of sacrifice. Upon this act of faith (Genesis 22:15), we are told; "And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from

Heaven and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of Heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

God Almighty showed his love for sinful humans by piercing his Son, his only Son, the Son he loved, on the altar of sacrifice. Thus our Lord would say, “Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13).

The example is thus set. The Lord Jesus declares all who follow must lay down their lives for him. We must love him more than father, mother, daughter, or son. (Matthew 10:37). All must be willing to pick up their cross and die to self-ambition, career, spouse and to self-will. The follower of Christ must consume him wholly, in a miracle where the Spirit possesses the believer. So it is no longer I that live but Christ that liveth within me. (Galatians 2:20). “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to

The Judgment Throne of Christ

Christ, and the two shall become one flesh." (Ephesians 5:31-32 paraphrased). So they are no longer two, but one. It is no longer my will but thy will be done, Oh Lord.

The Cross

And where is the wilderness today? Where is the altar of sacrifice that makes a man a priest of God? At the Cross. It is at the Cross of Jesus Christ where we go to be in union with Christ in death to self and the things dearest to our heart. It is here one is ordained as a priest of God.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” (Matthew 16:24).

But why must we go to the Cross? Because, saith the Lord, “none is good, save one, that is, God.” (Luke 18:19). When God looked at you and me he shook his head and said “utterly bankrupt, totally useless.” The only thing he could do was hang you on a gibbet, a stick, a tree on the outside of the encampment, for the Scriptures tell us not only did Christ die for us (Romans 5) but he died as us (Romans 6). In the wilderness the redeemed came face to face with their old man, their flesh, unable to worship the Lord as commanded, unable to

worship him in their personality, unable to enter God's rest.

“So God's rest is there for people to enter, but those who first heard this good news failed to enter because they disobeyed God.” (Hebrews 4:6).

The Israelites became prey for snake bites and plagues, drowned in sinkholes, and constantly fought the enemies of God. What an illustration of many professing Christians, continually beset by demons and problems. Their prayers go unanswered and God's promises seem so far away; but their answer is nigh.

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” (Romans 12:1).

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” (James 4:8).

It is at the Cross we draw near to God and where hearts are purified for God's glory. Here is where the power of the Lord is given to man for worship. The Cross of Jesus is where the cost of discipleship, the cost of following Christ is before us. It is to the Cross we must go.

40 Days

40 days in the wilderness were the Israelites tested. And 40 days in the wilderness was our Lord tempted and tested. (Luke 4:1-2). When found to be faithful and true, the ministry of Christ in worship to God Almighty began.

“And he came to Nazareth, [after 40 days in the wilderness] where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (Luke 4:16-19).

Before a Christian, redeemed by the blood of Jesus and forgiven of sin, can be useful to the Lord, can be a minister of God, he will be tested. I ask, have you been tested? Has your faith been put through the fiery trial that makes a priest of God?

The Judgment Throne of Christ

“For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver.” (Psalm 66:10). Again the Lord says of his people, “And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘They are my people’; and they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’” (Zechariah 13:9).

“And the result of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.” (Isaiah 32:17).

Death of an Alcoholic

I met such a man who was in the wilderness for ten years before he came to the Cross. He was an alcoholic for much of his adult life, lost his marriage and was estranged from his six children. In his testimony he said he came to know the Lord as Savior, and then prayed for an end to his addiction. But for ten years his prayers were not answered. Things got so bad he ended up in a padded cell, in a sanitarium. At that point he was so worn and felt so lost he put his life into the Lord's hands. Depleted of strength and hope, he asked the Lord to take his life, and then he fell. But before his limp body hit the floor a miracle happened. His addiction was gone. After ten years of maintaining self-will, of wanting Jesus to do him good, but not willing to abandon himself wholly to Christ, he broke. In that padded cell he came to the Cross and he saw Christ hanging, and then he walked to the back of the Cross and he hung himself there with his Savior. He reckoned himself crucified with Christ and gave his life, his will, his body to the Lord. And with tears streaming down his face, he said, "I finally confessed Jesus Christ to be Lord." A broken and contrite spirit I will not despise saith the Lord. After ten

years in the wilderness, Christ had become Lord, not in word but in reality. Then as he wept, he described how merciful the Lord was in restoring the relationships with his children. Into God's rest he had come. This was his land of peace and prosperity in Christ. A land just beyond the wilderness and over the Jordan.

Crossing the River Jordan

In Egypt the Lord has passed judgment on Pharaoh and upon the land. The sentence is death of every first born.

“Thus says the LORD, ‘About midnight I am going out into the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of the Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the millstones; all the firstborn of the cattle as well. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it anymore.’” (Exodus 11:4-6).

“It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.” (Exodus 12:42).

This was the final act that would cause Pharaoh to free God’s people. The judgment is against the entire land, all would suffer. But in the midst of this great and terrible judgment were the Israelites; they were also in the land. How would his people be spared that night, when the

Angel of Death descended? Salvation we see would not come by birthright, something due the seed of Abraham. No, salvation would come by the blood of a lamb, a lamb without blemish.

“Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your

sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:3-13).

What a picture we have of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The blood of the spotless Lamb of God, our Savior, redeeming the elect from judgment. But God's purpose was not just to free his people from bondage and death. The Lord's purpose was to gather a people that would worship him. And in order to do so he first had to redeem them; to deliver them from the strongholds of Egypt.

Yet redemption was just the beginning. There was a journey ahead for God's people. There was a wilderness to pass and a river to cross.

Dear friend, the blood of Jesus Christ was not shed on Calvary for you to get to Heaven. Our Lord gave himself so that God's people could

The Judgment Throne of Christ

be delivered from sin and death. Then once freed they would sacrifice, worship and glorify God Almighty. This is Christianity; followers of Christ who come broken and contrite in spirit, joined to his Spirit, righteous, loving and holy. These would cross the river Jordan as priests of the living God, prepared to do the works of Christ and enter God's rest.

Oh Lord, let me cross the river

I have answered the call and sided with thee

Oh Lord, let me cross the river

And be a priest to my God on Calvary

Oh Lord, let me cross the river

Your rest awaits me

Oh God find me worthy to eat from the Tree

Seven Works of God

From Genesis to Revelation the Lord's eternal plan unfolds, for those with eyes to see and ears to hear. In order to worship the Lord the people of God had to become a holy nation. And to become a minister of God one sacrificed life, will and body wholly unto the Lord. In sacrifice the believer would be anointed and made sacred. So ordained, God's people could now worship. The question then became what is worship? What is the worship service expected from a priest of God? Some thought it to be fasts, feasts, hymns, prayers, rites, ritual and ceremony.

In Isaiah 58:6-7, the Lord tells us plainly the worship service of a priest of God. The worship he expects from you and me.

“Is not this the fast [worship] that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh [family]?”

And then in Isaiah 58 verse 10 we are told to “...pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted.”

Never changing, from the Old to the New we find the Word of God ever true. Set as an example for his brethren to follow, our Lord again proclaims the nature of worship.

“The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed,” (Luke 4:18).

The holy calling, given us in Christ Jesus can be summed in seven works of God:

1. Present your body and spirit as a living sacrifice so the Lord may break you and then fill you with the Spirit of his Son.
2. With power, go into the world and free the lost sheep of God from the yoke of sin, blindness and strongholds through the proclamation of the full Word of God and intercessory prayer.
3. Share the Bread of Life, the Word that became flesh, through your witness and testimony to the sheep that hunger.

4. Pour out the Living Water -Christ in you- to those that thirst. This is the fruit of the Spirit, merciful, kind, longsuffering, patient, forgiving and most of all loving.

5. Bring the lost sheep into your home - the temple of the Lord, the body of Christ. In other words love your neighbor as yourself.

6. Forgive your brother seventy times seven. Humble yourself by loving those that offend and sin against you, thereby proving yourself merciful as your Heavenly Father.

7. Love and comfort those that mourn for righteousness; these are God's children, your brothers and sisters in Christ.

In these seven works we become a light and salt in the hand of God. (Matthew 5:13). "A vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." (2 Timothy 2:21).

"Lord what will thou have me to do," is the cry of the one ordained for service. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10).

Conformed to His Image

I don't want you to miss this point. The seven works of God testify of the Holy Spirit. They are the evidence of the overcomer; the one being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Romans 8:29 – “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”

How marvelous is the wisdom of God's plan. To create a kingdom of the righteous, imitators of God, his own arm, the Christ, brought him salvation. He puts Christ in us so we obtain his image, the image of the Righteous One.

But we were like babes in the wilderness and so he gave us shepherds after his own heart, who would feed us with knowledge and understanding. (Jeremiah 3:15)

Ephesians 4:11 – “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

for the equipping of the saints for the *work of service*, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a *mature man*, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the *fullness of Christ*. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, *we are to grow up in all aspects into Him* who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

But more than prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers he gives gifts to heal, encourage and comfort. “To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of

spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. One and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.” (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

This is the church of Jesus Christ. Men and women filled with his Spirit, meeting the needs of each other so we may do the works of God. “For my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19) “So that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” (2 Corinthians 9:8).

God's Church

I could now see the Kingdom of God. My eyes were opened and I saw the light of Jesus in his people. His church was all around me. A brother there, a sister here, all united in Christ, comforted and strengthened by the Spirit of God. Who could see? Only God could see.

Bob was the first brother whose light I saw, a man of humble stature and not much to behold. A man who told me he could not live for himself, so he lived for Christ. Broken and contrite in spirit, filled with the love of his Savior, Bob fed me simple wisdom. Then the Lord sent me others and all shared, taught, comforted, and strengthened me. Never were all in one building, never was there a head man, but God. This was the Lord's church, and I saw its perfect light.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for

he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”
(Matthew 5:43).

Miss Heaven by 18 inches

As the Lord gave me sight and wisdom grew, I saw the folly of the corner church. It engaged in things that did not profit the soul or glorify God. Ministries of activity, volunteerism and charity were on parade. And may the Lord bless those, whether they know Christ or not, who give themselves to help their fellow man. For the Lord is “kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” (Luke 6:35).

However, when we consider what pleases God, his eternal purpose and plan, my head shakes and sorrow grows. In the corner church is the one busy with activity, pomp and circumstance, believing this is worship. Yet this is unapproved incense, strange fire offered as worship to the Lord. (Leviticus 10:1-2). And sadly, to borrow a phrase from Paris Reidhead, these are the ones that will “miss Heaven by 18 inches.” These professing Christians sit at the feet of the true vine, they are wrapped around the vine but they’ve never been placed in the vine, which is Christ, by the Father. (John 15:1-11). And what did James say? Faith without the works of God is dead faith, and thus deceiving himself, that man’s religion is worthless. (James 2:26, 1:26-27).

Gift of Healing

How, when and where do we perform the works of God? When I asked the Lord this question his answer was, “I will direct your paths once you acknowledge me in all your ways.”

(Proverbs 3:6). The Lord said to me you’re not ready. My journey in the wilderness was not complete. While being used by the Lord, there was more that had to be refined and purged.

The Lord didn’t want some of me, he wanted all of me. My purpose and calling would be made clear when I trusted him in every aspect of my life. When I let go of the steering wheel sat in the back seat and let the Lord drive, singing amen and halleluiah all the while.

How, when and where do we perform the works of God? Paris Reidhead shared the story of a woman he knew that had the gift of healing.

The Lord would come to this sister and give her a name and an address, whether it was in a dream, vision or in a conscious state I do not know. But she would get on the bus, take a taxi or use whatever means and travel to the address. She would then knock on the door and introduce herself and state why she had come. And then invariably the person would praise

God saying he had been praying to the Lord for deliverance.

This dear sister asked Pastor Reidhead not to tell anyone of this gift and how the Lord was using her. It wasn't until after she passed that the story was told. There was no healing ministry announced in the church bulletin. No sign-up for volunteers. This was a ministry directed by the Good Shepherd who could hear the cries of his sheep. (Psalm 34:15). This is how the Lord works dear friend. All glory was to God, nothing was heaped upon man.

In my story, the Lord called me to go where I didn't want to go, and never planned to go. The cry of his sheep, a precious son, came from a jail cell. Who could hear? Only God could hear. A dear son was caught in the pit of despair; strongholds of addiction, incarceration, low self-esteem and without cause for hope. So the Lord sent me to that pit, a place I never wanted to be. But where I had to go, for I had prayed, "Lord let thy will be done, not my will."

And thus by God's will I found myself in a jailhouse for six weekends. To the world it looked like unfortunate circumstance, but what was meant for evil, God meant for good. A testimony was about to unfold. The very first

weekend, as I sat in that jail, the Lord prompted me to ask for one of those small prison Bibles. As I was reading, a man came and sat next to me. And when I turned and looked at him, he said “What are you reading?” At that moment God’s plan was made clear. I knew he was the reason why I was here. At the appointed time the Lord lifted my hands, put a prayer in my mouth, and caused me to hold this brother. Then my God allowed me to see a miracle. As my hands lay on him, the seed of Christ, the Spirit of God came upon this man. In tears, trembling and broken in spirit, he praised God for what he had wrought; Christ Jesus was now in him.

I saw the power of the Lord to set at liberty them that are bruised and oppressed. Praise to my Lord, my God for he has set free the captives and given hope to the poor in spirit. “He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Isaiah 61:1).

All Glory to God

Works of God bring glory to the Lord. They are things that cannot be done by the natural man. The testimony of Catherine Booth was the human heart cannot love like the Lord Jesus. It does not have the depth, height and width to embrace with peace that which man finds offensive. What man can sincerely love his enemies or forgive seventy times seven? Who, like Stephen, can forgive with a glad heart his killers, as they break the bones in his body? I submit to you it is impossible for man, but all things are possible through God.

The Lord did not command us to do what is possible through human efforts. He commanded man to do what was possible only through God Almighty. Works of God bring glory to the Lord, not man. And the tragedy of the church on the corner is that men have usurped the prerogative and authority reserved for the Good Shepherd. The natural has replaced the supernatural.

Love your neighbor who you find most offensive and who hates you. Forgive those that sin against you seventy times seven. Dispel the forces of darkness, strongholds and the Devil.

The Judgment Throne of Christ

Pour out your spirit in love for Christ.
Command God to move mountains. Love the
Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul
and strength.

These works of the righteous are not natural to man, but in fact supernatural. These acts of faith are antagonistic and rejected by the sons of Adam. For man is a rebel, an anarchist, and by nature desires to do his own will. He desires to be a god in his own right, a challenger to deity. And for this crime, for sin is such, a holy God has said repent or perish.

Stand in the Gap

I believe many a soul is in Hell tonight because there was no one to intercede. No one to stand in the gap and plead, “Mercy dear Lord.” No one to advocate life for the condemned. The Lord Jesus says he does not pray for the world but prays for the children of God, that they may be kept from the evil one. (John 17:9). So who is to pray and plead for the lost sheep? You and me. This is the duty given us as priests of God. To step in the gap and plead to him, as advocates, lawyers for those perishing.

The Lord says in John 17:20, “I do not ask on behalf of these alone [his disciples], but for those also who believe in Me through their word;” The prayer of the Lord Jesus is focused, you must catch this. He only prays for the disciples he has called and those followers that have believed in him through these disciples. The Lord through his Spirit gave power to his disciples (you and me) to proclaim the Gospel with effect. Then our Lord prays to the Father that all those who hear and believe through his servants will also be kept.

And with authority given us in Christ Jesus we are to dispel the forces of darkness that blind

the minds of unbelievers so they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ. (Acts 26:16-18).

Oh what a tragedy, what a shame when a Christian refuses to go on to perfection in the Lord; to be a minister of God. How many souls have perished because there was no one to stand in the gap?

“By this shall men know you are my disciples, [my followers, true Christian] if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35). What does this mean? Who is the brother or sister in Christ we are to love? Only God knows. Only the Lord knows the heart and who are his. Thus we are commanded to walk by faith and not by sight.

In the story of Catherine Booth we find a dear sister in Christ was trapped in the bowels of disfigured flesh, prison bars and the hate of men. But God heard her cries.

“In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.” (Psalm 18:6).

And to reach this one he needed a servant who would walk by faith. “But wait a minute,” you might say, “The woman in prison, she cursed God, how was she a sister in Christ?” To human sight she appeared vile, but to God she was his daughter from the womb, a sister of Jesus Christ, and he loved her. Who knew? Only God knew. Faithful to his Word that he would never leave or abandon his children, the Lord sent Mrs. Booth, a woman who walked not by sight but by the Spirit in her heart.

Works of the Righteous

Stephen, the Scriptures say, was a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. A man filled with grace and power. He was a righteous man.

“Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” (Acts 7:58)

Conformed to the image of his Lord Jesus Christ, Stephen was an intercessor. Even in death. With his last breath he pleads mercy and forgiveness for Saul of Tarsus, a murderer of God’s children, the man “who approved of Stephen’s execution.” (Acts 8:1). And when the prayer for redemption rose to the throne of God it was Lord Jesus that descended. Then on the road to Damascus he broke through the heart of Saul. “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). Redeemed from death, broken in spirit and given new life, Saul would become Paul, a

mighty servant of God. But it all began with the plea of a righteous man.

“The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” (James 5:16). And again the Scriptures say, “The Lord watches the righteous, and he pays attention to their prayers.” (1 Peter 3:12). And if there was any doubt, “The LORD is far away from the wicked, but he hears the prayers of the righteous.” (Proverbs 15:29).

The Scriptures do not say the Lord hears the prayers of all, it says he hears the prayers of the righteous. For the Lord Jesus does not pray for the world, but for those who are his.

For this purpose we received salvation, that we would approach the judgment throne of Christ as priests of mercy and forgiveness. And as priests, in union with our High Priest Christ Jesus, we turn wicked men from darkness to God.

For this purpose he gave teachers and preachers and spiritual fathers, to bring the people to completion in Christ Jesus, for the glory of God.

George Mueller's Fog

It was George Mueller who told the story of being on a ship sailing towards a missionary meeting. The fog on the sea was extremely dense, and visibility was weak. The ship's captain then pulled Mr. Mueller aside and said because of the fog they would arrive late and the meeting would be missed. Mueller then asked the captain to go below deck and join him in prayer. The prayer was brief, probably a few minutes. When they went back up to the deck, the fog had lifted. Mr. Mueller throughout his life could command the Lord and the Lord answered. Why? He was a righteous man, the Lord's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. (Ephesians 2:10).

And again the Scriptures say, "He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; But with kings on the throne He has seated them forever, and they are exalted." (Job 36:7).

Joshua 10:12: "Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon."

“So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar?” “And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. There was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.”

Joshua commanded the Lord and the Lord listened. The Lord listened to the voice of a man, a righteous man. As priests of the Most High the Lord desires his people to command him according to the measure of faith each is given.

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” (John 15:16).

“Truly, truly, I say to you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father. And whatever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” (John 14:12).

God's purpose will be done. The question is will he do it through you?

Esther 4:14 - "For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Homeless in NY

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith”¹

My mother will be 87 years of age this year, Lord willing. She has lived by herself for the last 15 years or so. At 83 she had heart complications and then about 2 years later had surgery for cancer. One day we were talking, I said, “Mom, you have to think about the time the Lord has given you.” Almost before I finished speaking, she said, “I know what the Lord wants me to do.”

She took in a young man that was homeless. He was in the country about 6 months from Jamaica. First, she called an owner of a restaurant she had never met, but had used for catering and said, “My grandson is a cook and is looking for a job do you have something for him?” The owner said yes without hesitation. Then she helped him through the paper work to apply for citizenship. She fed and clothed him all the while. One day he turned and said, “Ms. Mac you have showed me the love of a mother,

¹ 2 Timothy 4:7

a love that I never knew.” When I visited Mom I went into the bedroom where the young man was staying and by the night table, under the lamp, was an open Bible. You see this was a work of God. At almost 87 years of age she had a desire to please God, not a desire for a religious experience or a church activity. Do you see the difference?

This is approved worship, that in union with Christ Jesus we do the works of God and not the works of men. For even the pagans feed, clothe and build houses for their children and families. (Matthew 5:46).

Tommy Titcombe

I end with the story of Tommy Titcombe, as related by Paris Reidhead. Tommy was a short man about 5 feet 4 inches who lived in Canada. Tommy believed the Word of God that said “Tarry, [wait] until the Holy Ghost comes upon you and then [with power] go into the world and make disciples of men.” (Acts 1:8). Tommy applied and was selected for a mission’s trip to Africa, a location where there was one other regional missionary who knew the local language. After he arrived in Africa Tommy trekked to the village where he would labor. As he approached the village he passed by a signpost with skulls, some fresh, a warning that outsiders should not enter.

Undeterred, Tommy continued. When he entered the village he spied a man he perceived to be the chief. He then threw his bag on the ground and announced himself as a missionary for Christ. The chief told Tommy no white man could stay in the village and he must leave. At the outskirts of the village Tommy prayed to the Lord and asked, “How am I to proclaim your Word if I am not allowed in the village?” The Lord answered and told him to go upon a

hill overlooking the village and preach down to the people. There was a problem, however. Tommy had a voice that was squeaky and tiny in nature, so it would be hard for anyone to hear. Tommy then prayed again, “Lord how can I go, no one will hear me?” The Lord did not answer. Obedient to the Lord he went up to the hill. When Tommy began preaching what happened stunned him. His voice changed and sounded like a loud, deep baritone. Tommy preached the Word of God from that hill. In time about 12 people came out to meet him, at a little hut he built outside the village. Together they studied the Scriptures and formed the first church.

Now this enraged the chief and the village’s witch doctor, so they conspired to kill Tommy. Soon a band of men surrounded his hut. Fear gripped all, but Tommy told everyone to continue in reading, worship and prayer. The group did not leave the hut for about 2 days. When the men surrounding them left, Tommy said it was time to go. As they were walking away they turned and saw the men racing towards them. Death seemed certain. Tommy did not run, but stopped and waited until his attackers were within striking distance. He then lifted his right hand and commanded God

Almighty. “In the name of Jesus Christ stop!” he cried. At that instant it was said what seemed like an invisible wall sprang up, and the warriors literally froze in their tracks. No one could move from beyond that line. The witch doctor, the Devil himself, who led the attack shouted to Tommy, “Leave the village!” Tommy responded, “No, you leave.” The witch doctor, without a fight, walked away. Tommy now went up to each man and proclaimed the Word of God. He labored into the early morning hours listening to the needs of each person. By the end of the next day 400 people had come to the Lord. When Tommy left the village to return to Canada about 1500 people had come to the Lord. After some time had passed he went back to Africa to see the church. The church elders then led him to a clearing in the country side by flatbed truck. There Tommy saw about 20,000 people that had gathered in the name of Jesus.

Through one humble man with no fame or fortune, who waited until the power of the Holy Ghost had come upon him, God was glorified. Have you been brought into union with Christ Jesus for the glory of God, to do the works of Christ?

The Judgment Throne of Christ

"The bows of the warriors are broken, but those who stumbled are armed with strength." - 1

Samuel 2:4

The Day of Judgment

Wisdom brings life and life more abundantly, pressed down and overflowing with goodness. Thus on the Day of Judgment the wisdom of God is made clear that we may know fullness of life in Christ, today. Let's read:

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. I was hungry, and ye gave me meat (*the Word of God, the bread of life was proclaimed*): I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink (*the Spirit, the living water was poured out as a witness for the Lord*): I was a stranger, and ye took me in (*you loved your neighbor*): Naked, and ye clothed me (*shamed in sin, you covered sinners with intercessory prayer*): I was sick, and ye visited me (*you loved and comforted those that mourned for righteousness*): I was in prison, and ye came unto me (*you freed captives in bondage and from the yoke of sin*). Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or when

saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (Matthew 25:35).

The Lord calls those on his right hand righteous, conformed to the image of the Righteous One. Blessed by the Father, they had passed through the fiery trial that forges a minister of God. And the evidence of the righteous was they brought good news to the poor, comforted the brokenhearted, proclaimed liberty to the captives, and opened the prison to those who are bound. The love of Christ and his ministry was poured out from their hearts.

On his left hand, were those who also called Christ “Lord.” But these turned away from his sheep and the ministry of Christ, and in doing so rejected God.

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not

visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not *minister* to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:41).

Please see this, the people on the left hand of Christ saw themselves as Christian; but they served God in name only. (Matthew 7:21-23).

“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a *priest* was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a *Levite*, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.” (Luke 10:30)

“I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.” (Matthew 25:45).

The people on the left hand were religious in every way, church goers and tithers, fully expecting their reward in Heaven. But by

failing to love one another, they rejected God and proved their unrighteousness.

“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, [the religious] you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:20)

Therefore, on the Day of Judgment the Lord affirms “Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.” (Malachi 3:18).

Judge Not, Love Much

To the Christians of his day Saul of Tarsus was a vile sinner, a murderer of God's children, an abomination, and feared by the church. But from his mother's womb the Lord loved him. He had claimed Saul as his own, but he was lost and blind. Who knew? Only God knew.

When you loved your neighbor as yourself, and poured out your spirit to the thirsty, you were feeding God's sheep. Who knew? Only God knew.

When you forgave your brother seventy times seven, in mercy and kindness, you were giving God glory. Who knew? Only God knew.

On the Day of Judgment when the Lord says, "ye have done it unto me" he reveals the key to the blessed life. Commanded to walk by faith and not by sight, the righteous ones, those inheriting paradise, judged not but loved much, proving they loved God.

Now the redeemed say, "Ah dear Lord now I see. As I did unto the least of these, I did it unto you for they were yours from the beginning. And as I held your child in my hands, she that

was rejected, scorned and imprisoned, and kissed her face, I was kissing you Lord.”

By pouring out the love of Christ to his body we live out the sum of God’s commandments; to love the Lord, to love our brothers and sisters in Christ, and to love our neighbor.

“If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.” (1 John 4).

John 21:15-17 – “When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

Only the Good Shepherd can hear the cries of his sheep, only the Lord knows who are his. So it must be the Lord's ministry we serve by faith. And to hear the voice of the Lord, to heed the call to go, a servant must be in union with Christ Jesus. The person so abandoned becomes the hands, feet and arms of the Lord, the firstborn of many brethren (Romans 8:29). This is a spiritual thing, a supernatural thing, a heavenly work of God ordained from the beginning of time.

The Plan of Grace

In Isaiah 58:8-14 the Lord proclaims the plan of grace, the blessings reserved for the priest of God. Let's read: "Then (*after you have properly worshiped me*) shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily (*you will be an anointed light of God*); your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' (*You can command God Almighty!*)

Then in verse 10 the Lord exhorts us to give everything we have in our service as ministers of God.

"When thou shalt pour out thy soul² to the hungry (*the lost sheep who hunger for the Bread of Life*), and shalt satisfy the afflicted soul (*those oppressed, captive to sin*), then shall thy light rise up in darkness, and thy darkness

² As Paul emptied himself and became a drink offering for God's children – as did Christ, so must we. [Phil. 2:17, 2 Tim. 4:6, 1 John 3:16, 2 Cor. 12:15]

shall be as the noonday (*the Lord will dispel the forces of evil from around you*).

Verse 11 continues: “And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt (*your sorrow will turn to joy*); you shall raise up the foundations of many generations (*a Kingdom builder*); you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in,” (*you will reconcile God and men*).

Dear friend, I pray you see this. The greatest blessing on earth a believer can receive is promised to the priest of God. Men and women, broken and contrite in spirit, filled with mercy and forgiveness, that have abandoned themselves to be perfect in Christ Jesus.

Our destiny, the eternal plan for all believers in Christ, is to be kings and priests conformed to the image of our King and High Priest. Kings, because he gives us authority over the enemies of God and makes us stewards of his possessions. Priests, because we serve the Lord in sacrifice, intercession, prayer and love for one another.

The Judgment Throne of Christ

The Lord ends his proclamation of the blessed ones in verse 14: “Then (*after you have done according to my will*) you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

The fullness of delight in Christ Jesus and God’s rest is promised to those who do his will. And the will of God is that in love and holiness we serve as ministers in Christ.

It is here in the throne room the right hand of God is upon us. The blessed become God’s light and can dispel darkness. Here in the throne room we experience the miracles, power and joy of Christ.

Though we walk in the shadow of the valley of death, and suffering, decay, and destruction are on either side, the Lord says stand. In these times the Lord wants men and women to do the work of Christ, to shed God’s light, hope and love. “The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. You shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’” In the midst of a fiery furnace, laid bare before beasts, God says “Fear not, I am with you.”

“Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD

God, my God, is with you. He won't leave you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the LORD's house is finished.” (1 Chronicle 28:20). And the Lord's house is the body of Christ.

“No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.” (Joshua 1:5).

Praise to the Lord, my God, my Maker, my Comforter. He sets my feet on the highway of holiness and no evil shall beset me. He is my way maker, my protector, surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Amen