

# Online Grace Bible School

With  
Ken Legg, Australia

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**Online Grace Bible School  
Phase 1  
Firm Foundations**

**1) Apostolic Foundations**

- ✓ The most important part of a building is the part you cannot see - the foundations. This is the same with the church.
- ✓ The foundations determine the boundaries and the shape of the building. They dictate what can be built on them.
- ✓ The main function of apostles is to lay foundations. *'Having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone'* (Eph.2:20).
- ✓ The foundations are Jesus, 1 Cor.3:11. The apostles taught the disciples how to be rooted and grounded in Him.
- ✓ The 12 disciples were trained by Jesus for 3 years for this ministry. Their teaching came to be known as the apostle's doctrine, which they were to lay as a foundation for Christians and churches.

**Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal.1:11&12)**

- ✓ As Jesus taught the disciples for 3 years, so He instructed Paul concerning how the church was to be built.
- ✓ As a wise master builder Paul laid the foundations for local churches, 1 Cor.3:10-11.
- ✓ He had a tremendous body of truth which he taught in depth and detail in all the churches.
- ✓ He referred to this as a 'form of doctrine'. To the Romans he wrote: *'You obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered'* (Rom.6:17). These were indispensable truths for believers to be established upon.
- ✓ The word translated 'delivered' means to be handed over to something or someone.
- ✓ Under each covenant God's people were handed over to the teaching of that covenant.
- ✓ When Moses came down from the mountain with the 10 commandments, he not only delivered these to the Israelites, he also delivered the Israelites over to the commandments.
- ✓ They were handed over to *'the form of knowledge and truth in the law'* (Rom.2:20).
- ✓ The basis upon which God dealt with the old covenant people, then, was according to law. This was the form or shape of their relationship with Him.
- ✓ Referring to this time Paul says, *'We were kept under guard by the law'* (Gal.3:23).
- ✓ But when we hear and believe the gospel we are delivered *from* the law and handed over to the apostle's doctrine. Paul said, *'But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by...'* (Rom.7:6).
- ✓ The form of Paul's doctrine is outlined in the first half of Romans chapter 6. It concerns our baptism into Christ's death, burial and resurrection.
- ✓ This is the gospel (see 1 Cor.15:1-4). Not only was Jesus crucified, buried and raised for us; but we also died, and were buried and raised with Him to newness of life.
- ✓ In this union with Him we are set free from the form of the old covenant and handed over to the form of the apostolic teaching of the new covenant.
- ✓ When we believe the apostle's doctrine our lives are shaped by it.
- ✓ Through union with Christ we experience the finality of His death and the power of His resurrection life. This is the authentic Christian life.

**A pattern of sound words**

- ✓ The form of apostolic doctrine is fashioned by a *'pattern of sound words'*, i.e. key words relating to our life in Christ. Paul instructed Timothy: *'Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me'* (2 Tim.1:13).
- ✓ We have been poured into this mould of sound words.
- ✓ Some of Paul's sound words were: righteousness, in Christ, grace, faith, sons of God, new creation, new covenant, the new man, the love of God, eternal life, etc.
- ✓ As we hold fast to these sound words they shape our lives.
- ✓ The Greek word for 'sound' means healthy. Healthy teaching produces healthy living.

### **Shaped by the unsound words of the man-made teachings**

- ✓ If we have not been established on apostolic foundations then we have most likely been shaped by the form of the doctrines of man.
- ✓ These are characterized by terminology common to the religious environment from which we have come.
- ✓ In contrast to the pattern of sound words which Paul taught, these terms place the emphasis upon self and they are foreign to the new covenant.
- ✓ Therefore, they conjure up wrong and misleading ideas regarding the Christian life.
- ✓ For example, jargon used in some religious circles include: 'making a decision or commitment', 'paying the price', 'pressing in', 'breaking through', '4 steps to...', 'vision', 'on the cutting edge', 'sowing seeds to receive a harvest', 'revival', 'impartation', 'deliverance', 'breaking curses', 'recommitment', etc.

### **Paul's strategy for building the church**

- ✓ First he would teach this form of core apostolic truths to key people such as Timothy and Titus.
- ✓ Then he would instruct them to train local leaders, so they could teach the people in their churches.
- ✓ For example, he said to Timothy, *'The things that you have heard from me among many faithful witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also'* (2 Tim.2:2).
- ✓ And he said to Titus, an elder must hold fast *'the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict'* (Titus 1:9).
- ✓ It is clear that those who lead, disciple or influence others should first be established themselves upon apostolic foundations. Otherwise they will be blind leaders of the blind.
- ✓ The ability to teach others does not need to be a public, pulpit type of ministry, but elders must be able to train or disciple people on a one-to-one basis in sound apostolic foundations.

## 2) Righteousness

'...those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ' (Rom.5:17).

- ✓ Through the gift of righteousness and the abundance of God's grace to us in Christ, we are enabled to reign in life.
- ✓ If Satan can keep from us the truths of *righteousness* and *grace* he will prevent us from entering into every blessing; because we will believe that it is our behaviour which qualifies us for these things.

In this lesson we will look at the New Testament teaching of righteousness.

### Abraham is our example

- ✓ Abraham is called '*the father of us all*' (Rom.4:16). He is a model of our relationship with God.
- ✓ But in what way is he an example to us? Are we to try to live as he lived?
- ✓ No. He got many things wrong; but he got the most important thing right! He had a revelation that God's way of righteousness is through Jesus.
- ✓ God promised him that through his Seed many nations would be blessed with righteousness.
- ✓ He clearly understood that the 'Seed' was a reference to Christ. '*Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ*' (Gal.3:16).
- ✓ God preached the gospel to Abraham! '*And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed"*' (Gal.3:8). Jesus said to the Jews, '*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad*' (Jn.8:56).
- ✓ Abraham believed the same gospel we heard and believed.
- ✓ By believing the good news about Jesus he was made righteous. '*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness*' (Rom.4:3). So are we.

### The Great Exchange

The righteousness of God is the foundation of our relationship with God. It qualifies us for every good thing. It is based upon 'The Great Exchange'. '*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*' (2 Cor.5:21). This means:

#### A) God Imputes Our Sins To Jesus (see Rom.4:7&8)

- ✓ David committed two sins which were unpardonable under the law; yet they were not imputed to him.
- ✓ Even though David stood before God in his sins God justified him. God '*justifies the ungodly*' (Rom.4:5). How can He do that?
- ✓ Our sin was imputed to Christ and He bore its full judgment.
- ✓ At the River Jordan, Jesus announced that His baptism symbolized that He would fulfill all righteousness. '*Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"*' (Matt.3:15).
- ✓ In His baptism He demonstrated what would happen at the Cross. He would represent a race of sinners, die for their sin, be buried and raised again as the Head of the new creation who are righteous and in whom God is well pleased.
- ✓ Thus, the judgment for all our sin - past, present and future - has been imputed to Him. '*Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all (peoples) to Myself*' (Jn.12:31-32).

#### B) God Imputes The Righteousness Of Christ To Us (see Rom.4:6)

- ✓ The Jews were ignorant of God's way of righteousness and thought that they could be righteous by their obedience to the law. '*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God*' (Rom.10:3). Many make the same mistake.

- ✓ We are not made righteous by our obedience, but His. *'...as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous'*, (Rom.5:19).
- ✓ We do not *behave* unto righteousness; we *believe* unto righteousness.

### **Innocent or righteous?**

The foundation of blessing is a right relationship with God. Adam was blessed while he was in relationship with God. But he experienced the curse after he sinned. We are not in Adam - innocent until proven guilty; we are in Christ - righteous, even when we sin.

There is a difference between innocence and righteousness:

- ✓ When an innocent person sins, their sin is imputed to them.
- ✓ When a righteous person sins, their sin has been imputed to Christ. They are still blessed. *'Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin'* (Rom.4:8).
- ✓ *'...God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them...'* (2 Cor.5:19).
- ✓ *'For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more'* (Heb.8:12).

Example#1. Gen.12:10-20; 13:1-2. In this passage:

Who sinned?

Who did God rebuke?

Who did God bless?

Example#2. Gen.20:2-7, 14-16. In this passage:

Who sinned?

Who did God warn?

Who was blessed?

God could bless Abraham even when he sinned because he was righteous through faith in Christ. This is not a licence to sin. There are always consequences for sin. But God blesses us on the basis of our righteousness in Christ, not on the basis of our behaviour.

### 3) Identity

The most important question you can ask yourself is, 'Who Am I?' Sadly, many Christians receive their identity messages from the wrong sources. For example:

- ✓ Achievements
- ✓ Approval
- ✓ Appearance
- ✓ Behaviour

#### Who are you?

As Christians we do not receive our identity from our achievements, behaviour or appearance, nor from the approval or disapproval of others. Our identity is based upon the one with whom we are identified.

Romans 5:12-21 tells us:

- ✓ We were 'in Adam' people
- ✓ Now we are 'in Christ' people

Paul's favourite description of a Christian is someone who is 'in Christ'.

Understanding our new creation identity is vital to spiritual health, because: 'It's not what we do that determines who we are, but knowing who we are that will determine what we do.'

Our brain will steer our lives in the direction of the picture we have of ourselves.

The problem many Christians struggle with is this: They have a new identity, but have kept their old mentality.

#### Making the transition from old identity thinking to new identity thinking

We make the transition from old identity thinking to new identity thinking by renewing our minds.

In Romans 6:1-14 Paul shares 4 important stages in this process:

1) Romans 6:3-4 – KNOW that you died to your old identity in Adam and have been raised a new creation, with a brand new identity in Christ.

- ✓ It is the truth that sets us free.
- ✓ Satan's only power is deception. He can bring a person into bondage by making them believe a lie.
- ✓ We don't need a power encounter; but we do need a truth encounter.

2) Romans 6:8 – BELIEVE that you are now a new creation in Christ Jesus.

- ✓ Knowing the truth is not sufficient. We must believe it.
- ✓ Some Christians are unbelieving believers!

3) Romans 6:11 – RECKON it to be so, i.e. live according to what is now true of us.

- ✓ To reckon means to consider or conclude what is true of us and live accordingly.

4) Romans 6:13 – PRESENT the members of your body as instruments of righteousness.

- ✓ The Christian has a new nature living in the old body. The body we live in is the same body we had before we were saved.
- ✓ Previously, we obeyed the dictates and demands of the body; but now we are free from sin's dominion.
- ✓ We can choose to present the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness.

**4) Righteousness-consciousness**

- ✓ The writer to the Hebrews said that whilst the tabernacle/temple was still standing it was a symbol of the fact that the way into the presence of God was not yet available (see Heb.9:7-8).
- ✓ Though the temple no longer stands and the way into the presence of God has been opened, many still do not enjoy it.
- ✓ The veil of the tabernacle is a picture of the barrier which hinders us from enjoying the presence of God, i.e. sin-consciousness. *'It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience'* (Heb.9:9).
- ✓ Humans have devised many erroneous ways of trying to deal with sin, e.g. running from God, blaming others, denial, rationalizing, self-punishment, despair, etc.
- ✓ The most common response to a guilty conscience is to try to compensate for sin through doing works. These are dead works.
- ✓ God's answer to sin-consciousness is righteousness through the blood of Jesus: *'...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?'* (Heb.9:14).
- ✓ Understanding our righteousness through faith in Christ is essential for a healthy relationship with God.
- ✓ Those who are unskilled in the word of righteousness are referred to as 'babes', (see Heb.5:13). The first stage in our Christian growth is to know that all our sins have been forgiven. Then we are no longer babes but little children, (see 1 Jn.2:12a).
- ✓ We are exhorted to go on to 'perfection' by repenting of dead works and exercising faith in the blood of Jesus, *'Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God'* (Heb.6:1).
- ✓ The word 'perfection' means to bring a thing to completion for the purpose for which it was created. We were created for intimacy with God.

For us to be in this state of perfection it is essential that:

- A) We are convinced that God is no longer conscious of our sins.
- B) We are no longer conscious of our sins, but have an overwhelming sense of being righteous.

**A) God is no longer conscious of our sins**

- ✓ The new covenant is a better covenant based on better promises, (see Heb.8:6&7).
- ✓ One of those better promises is that through the death of Jesus our sins have been entirely and eternally put out of God's sight and thought. *'For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more'* (Heb.8:12).
- ✓ Not only will God never remember our sins against us again, but also heaven has been cleansed from the record of our sins, (see Heb.9:23-26).
- ✓ For the believer, the Second Coming of Jesus will be without any reference to sin: *'And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation'* (Heb.9:27&28).
- ✓ God will never condemn a believer.

**B) We are no longer conscious of our sins, but of our righteousness**

- ✓ Our conscience speaks to us about our moral condition.
- ✓ But it can only report accurately if it has been informed correctly.
- ✓ The function of the conscience is to speak to us; but the function of the blood is to speak to God. *'But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel'* (Heb.12:22-24).
- ✓ Our conscience may be weak and misinformed, but God is greater than our hearts. *'For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things'* (1 John 3:20).



- ✓ Satan is the accuser of the brethren. He uses religion for this purpose. Religion reminds us of sin. We see this is the continual offering of sacrifices under the old covenant. By the repetitive nature of this practice there was a constant reminder of sin.
- ✓ *'For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year'* (Heb.10:1-3).
- ✓ The same problem exists when Christianity becomes sin-focused.
- ✓ Religion reminds; but God forgets. His salvation not only deals with sin, but sin-consciousness also. *'But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God...For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified'* (Heb.10:12&14).
- ✓ The Holy Spirit does not convince us of sin, but of righteousness, *'But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more"'* (Heb.10:15-17).
- ✓ He is the Comforter. *'For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God'* (Rom.8:15&16).
- ✓ The Holy Spirit is given to us to show us the things that have been freely given to us in Christ, (see 1 Cor.2:9-12).

## 5) Grace

'...those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ' (Rom.5:17).

Grace is the way God relates to us under the new covenant. Satan uses religion as an attempt to replace grace with legalism.

- ✓ Legalism is the belief that my works are the basis for God's acceptance and blessing. The focus is upon self.
- ✓ Grace is the belief that I am always accepted and qualified for every blessing because of the finished work of Jesus. The focus is upon Jesus.

## Legalism

- ✓ Legalism pulls in the opposite direction to the Cross. It tries to get us to pay for that which God has already paid. It uses the law for this purpose.
- ✓ The Bible uses the term 'the law' in reference to the law of Moses. But when it uses the term 'law' it designates any legalistic system we may use in order to gain merit with God, or by which we may attempt to change.
- ✓ Romans 7:1-4. The New Testament is not opposed to the law, but to our marriage to it. Through our union with Christ we have died to the law that we may be married to Christ. He is now the source of our holiness. In Christ we do not have a law, but a life.

## Misconceptions about the Law and Grace

### 1) 'The Law will help me to live a better life'

- ✓ Paul was deceived into believing this, '*For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me*' (Rom.7:11).
- ✓ The law incites us to sin, not holiness, '*For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death*' (Rom.7:5); '*But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead*' (Rom.7:8)
- ✓ The law is weak because its power-base is the flesh, '*what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh*' (Rom.8:3).
- ✓ Legalists have the will to do the right thing, but not the ability. '*I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find*' (Rom.7:18).

### 2) 'I believe in grace; but it must be balanced with law'

- ✓ What we call 'balance' God calls 'mixture'. '*And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work*' (Rom.11:6).
- ✓ For grace to be effective it must remain radical. The gospel of grace as taught by Paul is '*the power of God unto salvation...*' (Rom.1:16). If we return to the law as a means of living, Christ ceases to have any effect on us, (see Gal.5:4).

### 3) 'Grace is just a license to sin'

- ✓ Grace never encourages people to sin, '*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works*' (Titus 2:11-14).
- ✓ Grace is the only thing that can get us out of sin, '*For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace*' (Rom.6:14).

4) 'I believe in grace, but we still have to do our part'

- ✓ Our part is to believe that He has done it all, *'Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent"'* (John 6:29).
- ✓ The just live by faith, *'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me'* (Gal.2:20).

5) 'If you want God's blessing, there's a price to pay'

- ✓ We have already been blessed with all things, *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ'* (Eph.1:3). When we receive the gift of righteousness we are qualified for every good thing, *'...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you'* (Matt.6:33).
- ✓ The price has already been paid in full. All things are given to us freely, because of Jesus, *'He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'* (Rom.8:32).

6) 'With grace there is no motive to give, serve and obey'

- ✓ Grace exposes any mercenary motive in the Christian life.
- ✓ But it doesn't make us lazy; in fact it empowers us to do much more than we could do in our own ability. *'But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me'* (1 Cor.15:10).

## 6) Faith

*'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith"' (Rom.1:16-17).*

The gospel reveals a righteousness which goes from faith to faith. Any teaching of righteousness that goes from faith to works is a false gospel.

### 1) Faith is the partner of grace

- ✓ Man's response to God under the law was works; our response under grace is faith, Jn.6:29.
- ✓ Grace is what God has done for us; faith is how we experience what He has done.
- ✓ Faith is our response to what God has provided for us in Christ.
- ✓ *'We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand'* (Rom.5:2).
- ✓ Faith does not save us. Jesus saves us; faith enables us to lay hold of Him.
- ✓ It is by grace that we are saved, through faith. But even our faith is a gift from God.
- ✓ As we have received Christ by faith, so we live by faith.
- ✓ Paul needed to rebuke the Galatians because they had been tricked into going from faith back into works for their righteousness. He asked them, *'Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?'* (Gal.3:3).
- ✓ Without faith it is impossible to please Him. Whatever is not of faith is sin.

### 2) Christ is the prime focus of our faith.

- ✓ People try to live by faith in faith. But faith must have an object in which to trust.
- ✓ *That* you believe is not the issue; *what* you believe, is.
- ✓ The strength of our faith is determined by the strength of the object we trust in.
- ✓ The prime object of our faith is Christ.
- ✓ In the entire Old Testament, about 75-80% of the Bible, faith is mentioned only about 15 times. The reason is that the prime object of our faith, Jesus Christ, had not yet come, *'But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor'* (Gal.3:22-23).
- ✓ Approximately 115 verses in the New Testament teach that when a person *believes* in Christ (verb) they are saved, have eternal life, are justified, etc. In addition there are approximately 35 verses which say that a person is saved, justified or becomes righteous by *faith* (noun). Total = approximately 150 times faith alone is presented as our response to God's grace.
- ✓ In each of these verses no other condition is demanded. Nothing is mixed with or added to faith as a prerequisite for salvation.
- ✓ Our faith is not in the Bible, but in Christ. The Bible is God's revelation of Him.
- ✓ We can know the Bible but not know Christ, as did the Pharisees. Jesus said to them: *'You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life'* (Jn.5:39-40). If they really understood the Bible they would have known Him, see Jn.5:46-47.
- ✓ Genuine biblical faith looks to Christ. **Forsaking All I Trust Him.**
- ✓ Those who have faith, highly value Christ. *'...to you who believe, He is precious...'* (1 Pet.2:7).
- ✓ To increase your faith in God you must increase your knowledge of Him, your faith object.

### 3) Thanksgiving is the language of faith

- ✓ Murmuring and complaining are the language of unbelief; thanksgiving is the language of faith.
- ✓ We express our faith by giving thanks to God for the finished work of Christ, which makes us complete and sufficient for all things.

- ✓ *'Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name' (Heb.13:15).*
- ✓ *Jesus expressed His faith in the Father by giving thanks.*
- ✓ *For example, at the feeding of the 5,000: 'And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted' (Jn.6:11). '...however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks' (Jn.6:23).*
- ✓ *Also, at the raising of Lazarus, 'Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me"' (Jn.11:41).*
- ✓ *In both situations Jesus gave evidence to His faith in the Father's control over the circumstances.*
- ✓ *We express our faith continuously in a similar way, 'In everything give thanks' (1 Thes.5:18).*
- ✓ *We give thanks not just for what He has done but for what He is going to do.*
- ✓ *He has made us sufficient for all things. God, who gave us salvation in Christ, has made provision for every other need in Him, Rom.8:32.*
- ✓ *'As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving' (Col.2:6&7).*
- ✓ *Therefore, we are to offer 'supplications with thanksgivings' (Phil.4:6); and 'continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving' (Col.4:2).*

## 7) The New Covenant

Read Gal.3:5-9. God is a God of covenant. In order to relate to Him correctly we must understand covenants.

- ✓ The Promise Covenant which God made with Abraham is the central, supreme covenant in the Bible.
- ✓ It concerns God's plan for worldwide redemption and is the same as the New Covenant, centering on Jesus, (3:8).
- ✓ In both these covenants righteousness is imputed to those who believe in Christ.

So why was the Mosaic Covenant necessary and what is its relationship to the Promise Covenant? In Galatians 3 Paul makes these 4 points:

### 1) God's Covenant of Promise with Abraham is not annulled, modified or replaced by the Law, (Gal.3:15-17)

- ✓ 3:15. Once ratified, an unconditional covenant is unable to be modified or nullified by man's behavior.
- ✓ God alone stood behind the Promise Covenant with Abraham, (see Heb.6:13-18). It is an unconditional covenant.
- ✓ 3:16. God never made a covenant directly with us, or we with Him. The promises were made to Abraham and Christ. We are included because we are in Christ.
- ✓ 3:17. The Law came 430 years after the Promise Covenant. Whatever its purpose was, it in no way annulled God's covenant with Abraham.

### 2) The Law is never presented as an alternative to faith as a means of salvation, (Gal.3:18)

- ✓ 3:18. God did not save Abraham by the law but through faith in God's promise concerning the coming Seed.
- ✓ If righteousness could have come through the Law, then God would never have sent His Son to die for us. *'...if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law'* (Gal.3:21).

### 3) The purpose of the Law was to support the Covenant of Promise, (Gal.3:19-25)

- ✓ 3:19a. If the law did not impart righteousness and does not sanctify us, why was it given?
- ✓ It was given *'because of transgressions,'* i.e. Israel's. They were inclined towards idolatry. The law kept them marked out as a people separated unto God.
- ✓ When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt He made a covenant with them which governed them nationally, civilly, ceremonially and morally. This was the only way they could be preserved as a distinct people who were called to keep alive the promise of the Coming Seed. They were *'kept under guard by the law'* (3:23).
- ✓ 3:21-22. The law is not the enemy of the Promise. It served and supported the Promise.
- ✓ It was an interim, temporary measure; not a perpetual covenant, as some say, (3:19&25).

### 4) The Law tended towards being cursed; the Promise is characterized by blessing, (Gal.3:10-14)

Contrast 3:9&10. Under the New Covenant:

We are free from the curse because Christ became a curse, i.e. an 'accursed one' for us.

- ✓ This curse was openly demonstrated by the way that Christ died. Under the law, a person who was hanged upon a tree was cursed, *'...his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God'* (Deut.21:23).
- ✓ Jesus suffered the curse of the law until He cried, 'It is finished,' i.e. until both the law and its curse was fulfilled.
- ✓ The only way a believer can now be exposed to a curse is by attempting to live by the law.
- ✓ 3:13-14. We are not cursed but blessed, (see also 3:8&9).
- ✓ We should be studying the blessings, not the curses! E.g. see Eph.1:3-14; 1 Cor.2:9-12.

### **The Old and New Covenants are illustrated in the allegory of Sarah and Hagar, Gal.4:21-31**

- ✓ Judaizers boasted that they were Abraham's sons, i.e. physical descendants. But he had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, to different mothers. The status of each son was determined by the status of their mother. He asked, *'Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman'* (Gal.4:21-22).
- ✓ These represented the two covenants of Promise (Sarah) and Law (Hagar). *'...which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all'* (Gal.4:24-26).
- ✓ Paul asserts, *'Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise'* (Gal.4:28).
- ✓ But he asks the legalists: *'Who is your mother?'*
- ✓ Law and grace cannot co-exist. One has to go. When Hagar and Ishmael were cast out, peace came to Abraham's home. Only when we break with legalism will we know peace. *'...what does the Scripture say? 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman''* (Gal.4:30).
- ✓ Don't try to mix covenants. Don't cut a piece out of the garment of the new covenant to patch up the garment of the old covenant! Throw away the old garment and wear the new one!
- ✓ We are to fight against any attempt of re-enslavement to the Law. *'Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage'* (Gal.5:1).

## 8) Sons of God

- ✓ During the old covenant period God's people were under the guardianship of the law. This is depicted by the custom of a child being under a pedagogue (household servant) in New Testament times. *'But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith'* (Gal.3:23-24).
- ✓ Under this arrangement a child fared no better than a household servant. *'Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father'* (Gal.4:1-2).
- ✓ But there was a specific moment, marked by a special occasion, when this changed. Then, the child was officially adopted into his father's family. He was no longer a 'child' but a 'son'.
- ✓ The Cross was the defining moment when God's people were no longer servants but sons. *'But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons'* (Gal.4:4-5).
- ✓ This was characterized by, 1) Freedom from the pedagogue (law), *'...after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor'* (Gal.3:25); 2) Intimacy with the Father, *'you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus'* (Gal.3:26).
- ✓ Jesus said, *'A slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever'*, (John 8:35). A servant serves to maintain his place in the house; a son's place in the house is secure because it is not based on his service but his position as a son.

### We are dead to the law and alive to the Spirit

- ✓ For the believer the Holy Spirit has taken the place of the law, *'...if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law'* (Gal.5:18). We are dead to the law and alive to the Spirit.
- ✓ In Gal.4:4 we read that God sent forth His Son; In Gal.4:6 we are told He sent forth the Spirit of His Son.
- ✓ In Christ we have the *position* of sons; through the Spirit we have the *experience* of sons. The Spirit helps us to feel like sons, even like Jesus Himself, in the presence of the Father.
- ✓ It is not fitting that those who have received the status of sons should relate to the Father on the basis of laws, rules, regulations, etc. This would be a return to childhood/servant status.
- ✓ Sadly, this is what the Galatians did when they succumbed to legalistic teachers. *'But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain'* (Gal.4:9-11).

### The status of sonship is characterized by intimacy with the Father

- ✓ A servant mentality is not only characterized by laws but also by dependence on law-givers. People with a servant mentality always need someone to tell them what to do. They need a human mediator between them and God.
- ✓ The status of sonship is characterized by intimacy with the Father.
- ✓ Sons are Spirit-led. *'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God'*, (Rom.8:14).
- ✓ Under the new covenant there is a new level of intimacy based on a new kind of relationship. There is no human mediator between us and God, *'None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them'*, (Heb.8:11).
- ✓ The less we understand what it means to be sons the more we will behave like servants. We will need rules, and someone to tell us what to do.
- ✓ Jesus said, *'My sheep hear my voice.'* We must learn to distinguish His voice from the voice of strangers.
- ✓ The more we know His character the more we will recognize His voice.



## 9) A New Creation

The Bible mentions our nature twice:

1) Our old nature which we received from Adam at birth, *'And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others' (Eph.2:1-3).*

2) Our new nature which we received at the new birth. We were baptized into Christ and became *'partakers of the divine nature'*, (2 Pet.1:4). *'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new'*, (2 Cor.5:17).

This means:

- ✓ We died to who we were in Adam and are now joined to Christ. *'He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him'* (1 Cor.6:17).
- ✓ As a branch is grafted into a vine so we are grafted into *'Christ who is our life...'* (Col 3:4).
- ✓ The old covenant was law-giving; the new covenant is life-giving.
- ✓ We used to be one kind of creature but now we're another. We used to be dead but now we're alive. We used to be darkness, but now we are light, etc. (see Eph.2:1; 5:8).
- ✓ In fact this new creation cannot sin and doesn't even want to sin! *'Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous...Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God'* (1 John.3:7-9).

### But Christians do still sin

Yet, as Christians we do sin. How do you react when you sin?

When a Christian sins, two issues need to be understood - our identity and our behavior.

- ✓ Our identity is in Christ; it is who we now are in Him. It is what we are in our spirit.
- ✓ The writer to the Hebrews describes us as *'the spirits of just men made perfect'* (Heb.12:23).
- ✓ In Him we are perfect, sinless and incorruptible. Our spirit cannot be corrupted by sin.
- ✓ Our behaviour takes place in the realm of our body, our flesh. The relics of sin dwell in our unredeemed body. We can still be tempted, and we are. We can still sin, and sometimes we do.
- ✓ When this happens our spirit hates it. That's because we don't have a sinful nature. We possess the divine nature and this opposes sin. *'Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me...For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members'* (Rom.7:20,22-23).
- ✓ So when a Christian sins a civil war takes place within him or her. The flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.

### Look in the mirror to see what is true about you!

- ✓ In the midst of this civil war Satan tries to get us to base our identity upon our behaviour.
- ✓ We must be clear about the distinction between our behaviour which takes place in the realm of the body and our identity which is who we are in the Spirit. *'And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness'* (Rom.8:10).
- ✓ We will only resolve this confusion by looking to God's Word instead of to our behaviour.
- ✓ As a mirror accurately reflects what is true about our appearance so God's Word reveals what is true about us now as a new creation.

- ✓ *'For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was'* (James 1:23-24).
- ✓ James is referring here to a person who finds it difficult to live as he should because he has forgotten who he is.
- ✓ Our behaviour doesn't define us. What Jesus did at the cross is what defines us.
- ✓ As we behold in the mirror of God's Word the glory of who we are in Christ our behaviour will be transformed into the same image.
- ✓ What is true of us in our spirit will eventually manifest itself in the way we live. *'But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord'* (2 Cor.3:18).
- ✓ We can't be who we are until we know who we are.

## 10) The New Man

- ✓ Paul exhorted the Ephesians to, '*...walk worthy of the calling with which you were called*' (Eph.4:1).
- ✓ And to the Philippians he wrote, '*...let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ*' (Phil.1:27).
- ✓ The word '*worthy*' means 'as is fitting or appropriate'.

There is a practical outworking of the grace of God in our daily lives. Sadly, there are many wrong teachings regarding this.

For example:

- ✓ Some teach **deficiency**, i.e. the reason we may struggle in our Christian walk is because God has left us without sufficient resources. We need more! This leads to a dichotomy in the body of Christ between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', and leads to spiritual co-dependency where the 'haves' need to impart to the 'have-nots'. But we already possess all we need for life and godliness. Growth is just an expansion of the life we already have.
- ✓ Some teach **legalism**, i.e. that holiness is to be attained by our striving, or is manufactured by our works. This is behaviour modification. They believe we can train the flesh how to behave properly. However, we are already holy. Godliness is an outflow of that which we are already in possession of.
- ✓ Some teach **passivity**, i.e. 'just let go and let God!' Those who teach this fear that any kind of exhortation or instruction concerning practical living will lead to legalism. But this kind of teaching is disempowering. Paul's letters are full of exhortations concerning how we are to live, because he knew that we have already been empowered to live as children of light.

So what did Paul teach? Paul's teachings are in two distinct parts: *doctrine* and *exhortation*. This is like the two blades of a pair of scissors.

### 1) The first blade: doctrine

- ✓ A) What Christ has *done* for us, i.e. He has made us righteous, complete, holy, sons of God, etc. This concerns our identity in Christ through baptism into His death, burial and resurrection.
- ✓ B) What Christ has *given* to us, i.e. His life in us. Everything we need for godliness lives inside us, '*...His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue*' (2 Pet.1:3). Thus, whatever God asks of us He has already given to us.

### 2) The second blade: exhortation

- ✓ We are called to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, i.e. to be who we are and to bring forth what we have.
- ✓ '*...as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering...*' (Col.3:12).
- ✓ We are to work out what He has worked in us, '*...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure*' (Phil.2:12-13). Notice that Paul tells us to work *out* our salvation, not work *on* it or *at* it.
- ✓ We do this by faith - '*...the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me*' (Gal.2:20). The Christian life is '*...from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith"*' (Rom.1:17).
- ✓ As we put on the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, we make no provision for the flesh, '*...put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts*' (Rom.13:14).
- ✓ As we put on the new man in Christ, we put off the old behaviour, (see Eph.4:22-32).
- ✓ Our focus is not on dealing with the flesh, but walking in the Spirit. If we walk in the Spirit the consequence will be that we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. '*Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*' (Gal.5:16).
- ✓ Similarly, if we offer the members of our bodies for righteousness they are not available for sin, (see Rom.6:13,16,19).
- ✓ Our obedience is made possible by the Holy Spirit. '*For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live*' (Rom.8:13).

**11) The Love of God**

- ✓ It's not *that* you believe in God which is important, but *what* you believe about Him.
- ✓ *What* you believe about God determines how you will relate to Him.
- ✓ If you believe He is against you and wants to judge you and punish you for your mistakes, you will fear Him rather than trust Him; you will run from Him instead of drawing near to Him.
- ✓ Fear has torment but perfect love casts out fear.
- ✓ The love of God is our foundation for faith.
- ✓ There is nothing we can do to make God love us more, and there's nothing we can do that will make Him love us less. We need a revelation of this.
- ✓ God wants us to wake up every day with an overwhelming sense of His love towards us.
- ✓ The love of God is our resting place...and His. *'The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing'* (Zeph.3:17). He will cause us to rest because of His love.

Where do we get our perspective of God? Jesus is *'the image of the invisible God'* (Col.1:15). Therefore, any image we have of God which does not conform to the image we see in Jesus is a false representation of God.

The relationship Jesus had with His disciples is a model of the relationship God wants us to have with Him.

- ✓ Jesus loved His disciples *'unto the end'* (Jn.13:1). The Greek for *'unto the end'* is *telos*, meaning to the utmost degree; without limits. The NIV says, *'He showed them the full extent of His love'*.
- ✓ What is the full extent of His love?
- ✓ The Cross is the full extent of God's love to us. There is no love greater than this. *'Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends'* (Jn.15:13).
- ✓ Jesus wanted them to see that in the same way He loved the disciples, the Father loved them also. *"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him". Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"* (Jn.14:7-9).

Did the disciples get the revelation of His love?

- ✓ Some got it. E.g. John referred to himself several times as *'the disciple whom Jesus loved'* (Jn.13:23). See also Gal.2:20.
- ✓ Some were going to get it. E.g. Peter thought that his relationship with Jesus was determined by how much he loved Jesus. He wanted to show Jesus that he loved Him more than the other disciples. When Peter's love failed, Jesus revealed to him that his relationship was based on how much Jesus loved him, not vice versa, (Jn.13:36-38; 21:15-17).
- ✓ Some never got it. E.g. Judas. He was the only disciple who never lived to see the cross, (Jn.13:24-26).

**John received the greatest revelation of God's love and was the best teacher of it. He taught us that:**

1) The unconditional love of God is the foundation of our relationship with 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'* (1 Jn.4:10).

- ✓ We are rooted and grounded in love. Paul prayed that the church, *'being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God'* (Eph.3:17).
- ✓ Mary sat at His feet until she knew she was loved. Out of this flowed her service to Jesus.

2) Knowing God's love is not sufficient; we must also believe it. *'We have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him'* (1 Jn.4:16).

- ✓ When we truly believe God's love we experience it in our emotions, *'...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us'* (Rom.5:5).
- ✓ If we don't experience God's love with our emotions it will be difficult to retain it in our thoughts.

3) Faith reaches maturity through a revelation of God's love. *'The one who fears is not made perfect in love'* (1 Jn.4:18).

- ✓ Fear isn't in God's nature. He fears nothing. Therefore His holiness, like all His other attributes, is not a product of fear but of love.
- ✓ Likewise, fear will never produce holiness in us. Only love will. Fear will not change us, but responding to God's love will transform us more than anything else.
- ✓ Therefore, before God can change us, He must expel our fear and teach us the wonder of living in His love. *'Perfect love casts out fear'* (1 John 4:18).
- ✓ There is nothing more critical to spiritual growth than making the transition from living by fear to knowing God's love and responding to it.

## 12) Eternal Life

Jesus, through the shedding of His blood, has '*obtained eternal redemption*' for us, (Heb.9:12). Just like the children of Israel in the wilderness, Christians may wander around in the wilderness; but there is no going back to Egypt! Those whom God has saved are saved forever.

We are eternally secure:

### 1) Because of the Father

- ✓ In the first few chapters of Romans God is portrayed as our Judge. And yet we see that He does not judge us because He has executed total judgment for our sins upon His Son in accordance with His righteousness.
- ✓ Because of this we will never come into judgment for sin again, '*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life*' (Jn.5:24).
- ✓ We have been taken out of the courtroom and brought into God's family. God is now our Father, '*For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*' (Rom.8:15-16).
- ✓ Our salvation did not begin with our 'decision' to follow Christ. It stretches from the eternal past to the eternal future, '*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified*' (Rom.8:29-30).
- ✓ Salvation is God's work from beginning to end.
- ✓ We must not make the mistake of likening God to ourselves. He asks, '*Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you*' (Isa.49:15). Balaam declared, '*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*' (Num.23:19). In other words He is faithful even when we are not.
- ✓ We must think according to Biblical revelation; not according to human reason. This will lead us to correct conclusions.
- ✓ Note Paul's conclusions in Rom.8:31-39.

### 2) Because of the Son

- ✓ When we were saved we were given to Christ by the Father for safe-keeping. '*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out*' (Jn.6:37).
- ✓ We are double-wrapped in the Father and the Son. '*...your life is hidden with Christ in God*' (Col.3:3). '*I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand*' (Jn.10:28-29).
- ✓ When we believed in Jesus we were united with Him in His death, burial and resurrection.
- ✓ We are now joined to Him so as to become actual members or parts of His body. '*Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually*' (1 Cor.12:27).
- ✓ That's how secure we are; we are of one body with Him! If we could perish, Christ's body would be dismembered.
- ✓ In Rom.8:1, Paul says emphatically that there is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. This is an absolute statement. It means not now, not ever, not under any circumstances - never!
- ✓ If God saved us when we were His enemies, how much more will He keep us now that we are reconciled to Him! If God loved us when we were before Him in our sinful state, how much more does He love us now that we are before Him in Christ who is our life! '*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life*' (Rom.5:8-10).

### 3) Because of the Holy Spirit

- ✓ When we were saved we were also sealed with the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ This guarantees our security until Jesus returns to take us to be with Him. *'In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory'* (Eph.1:13&14).
- ✓ A seal is a proof of ownership. God has put a seal on us to demonstrate that we are His. The seal is the Holy Spirit Himself.
- ✓ A seal is also a pledge of intention, like a deposit or an engagement ring. *'Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit'* (2 Cor.1:21-22).
- ✓ We are sealed until the day of redemption, i.e. the day of Christ's return. *'And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption'* (Eph.4:30).