

THE LORD'S PRAYER PART 2

Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery word, 1 August 2021
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Introduction

Hello, everyone. In our last session, we began to consider Jesus' instructions regarding how we are to pray. We understood that, through these instructions, Jesus was teaching us regarding 'the fear of the Lord', so that we would enter His *rest*.

We understand that the prayer that He taught is not simply a ritual; rather, it is a total statement of *our participation* in the covenant that God has made with us.

Thus, understanding this prayer is actually foundational to how we 'pray at all times', or 'pray without ceasing'.

The reality is that we are actually *living* what Jesus taught us to pray.

Last time, we considered the statements, 'Our Father in heaven', 'Hallowed be Your name' and 'Your kingdom come'.

In this session we will focus on the next statement, 'Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'. Now, this is actually a large subject, so today we will mark out the key content points. We will look at its application in more detail in the next session.

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven; our response of faith

We have noted that our prayer of 'Hallowed be Your name' is the evidence that we are obtaining the fear of the Lord, and that we are pressing in to His name, or being 'nailed' into that fellowship context for our life. It is our expression as a son of God.

So, as those who fear the Lord and hallow His name, we pray to the Father, 'Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'

This aspect of prayer is a request for the Father's will, which has already been declared for us in heavenly places - not only declared, but also *finished* - to be *fulfilled* in our lives. It is *the response of faith* that a person makes when they have been illuminated to the reality that Christ has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified in their sonship

Asking for the Father's will to be done, on earth as it is in heaven is the response of faith of one who has been illuminated that He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. This means that the will being done on earth is our 'sanctification'.

Our sanctification depends on our receiving the word of the messenger

In this regard, Paul said, 'Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should *abound more and more*.' 1Th 4:1. He was saying that we should grow and mature as a son of God, and bear the fruits of sonship.

'We urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just *as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God*.' 1Th 4:1-5.

So, our ability, or capacity, to 'abound as a son of God' depends on receiving from a messenger administration, the presbytery, how we ought to walk to please God.

'For you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification.' 1Th 4:2-3.

So our sanctification is this 'abounding in our sonship'.

'This is the will of God, your sanctification' as we walk in obedience to His word

Now, your Bible might say that the sanctification is abstaining from sexual immorality - that is a grammatical error. 'This is the will of God, your sanctification' refers to what he had just pronounced.

So then, in order for that abounding to happen so that we obtain the will of God, our sanctification, 'you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honour, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God'.

Remember that we have been praying, 'Our Father in heaven.' Hence, a person who does not

know God and does not have that *connection to the Father* is in slavery to these lusts, or passions, which is the passion of sin.

In these verses, Paul explained that the will of God – as we pray, ‘Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven’ – is our sanctification.

And our sanctification is to walk and grow as a son of God through obedience to the word of the Lord’s messengers.

Blamelessness – His will being done

In summary, the will of God describes ‘walking blamelessly before the Lord’. We have taken weeks to talk about blamelessness. This subject of ‘the will in heaven being done on earth’ is the subject of ‘blamelessness’.

That is exactly what Paul said regarding this point. He said, ‘Brethren, we urge and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us *how you ought to walk and to please God.*’

Rejecting the sanctification of the Spirit

It is important to note, then, that we cannot fulfil our sanctification if we are pursuing ‘the desires of the flesh’. This is ‘the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life’.

To emphasise this point, Paul drew particular attention to sexual immorality, which continues to be a pervasive and destructive issue in the church; particularly addiction to pornography in various forms.

Now, a person’s susceptibility to this uncleanness and every other form of corruption is because they *reject the sanctification of the Spirit.*

It is not because it is ‘out of their control’. It is because they have *rejected* sanctification and, as a result, have remained captive to this principle within them.

They *will not join* the process through which this sanctification of the Spirit is effective in their life, because they give up the word of truth, which is spoken through Christ’s messengers, for a lie.

Choosing to live by a lie; the other law

They give up the word of truth, which comes through a messenger administration – stars in the hand of – and, instead, they receive and live by a lie.

Now, in the first instance, the lie is the word through which the other law was fathered within mankind, by Satan.

But we continue to choose this lie when we live by our own understanding or perspective of what is good or evil for ourselves.

So, the pursuit of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil caused ‘the other law’ to be fathered within us. And we continue to choose an alternative word, or a lie, when we live by that principle.

In this regard, the lie includes the religious, or fleshly, strategies that we employ to obtain deliverance or relief from the corruptions that beset us.

Paul said, ‘You have to abstain from sexual immorality’, and we are saying that this is a pervasive problem in the church.

But the reason why people remain slaves to this besetting sin is because they *choose a lie.*

They actually reject the word of truth spoken through Christ’s messengers.

Examples of the lies chosen instead of the truth of sanctification

So, what is the lie that they choose?

For example, this may include *the pursuit of absolution for their sin* through confidential confession with a clergy-style leader. Now, we do need to ‘walk in the light’, but this desire for absolution because of some confidential engagement with an appointed person is actually a *concealment* of our situation. It is not walking in the light, at all. It is a lie. It is an alternative to fellowship in the light.

The second lie might be *the reliance on techniques and technologies to curb their behaviour* or to make access to this destructive material, such as pornography, more difficult.

These sorts of technologies, be they guards on a computer or other safeguards, may be of some assistance; and I’m not saying don’t use them. Of course, if that is of some assistance, they are helpful.

But if your *deliverance* from this desire, or lust, is because your practice is being hindered by technology, you are not walking in the Spirit.

The Lord does not want your behaviour to be constrained by technology. He wants you to *walk by the Spirit*.

Then there is a change in our lives which is the evidence of deliverance from slavery to sin, to become slaves of righteousness. This is what it means to be ‘sanctified by the Spirit’.

A third lie that we adopt is *trying really hard in the flesh to resist the desires of the flesh*, as though merely our own capacity to avoid unrighteousness and to live righteously will bear fruit. We know that it doesn’t bear good fruit; yet we try really hard at times to live righteously.

A fourth lie is the belief that *the deeds of the flesh are overlooked by God because of His forgiveness*. It is the belief that, because Christ’s blood’s been shed on our behalf then, every time we fall, we simply ask for His forgiveness, and that sin is covered.

Now, none of those techniques or approaches are going to obtain eternal life, because none of them are *sanctification*.

They are all exercises of the flesh, motivated by a *lie*.

Our journey in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings, receiving the word from His messengers

The apostle Peter summarised the process that *should* be active in our lives, through which we ‘abound more and more’ as sons of God.

Addressing the church, he said, ‘To the *pilgrims*.’ 1Pe 1:1. This letter was written to those who are *joined to a journey*, and the way in which they are walking is *the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings*. It is the pathway of salvation that He pioneered for them.

You and I are pilgrims, but not because of our mental ‘connection’ to a theology. We are pilgrims because we have *received from the messengers how we ought to walk* and to please God.

So we see that Peter wrote to the same people to whom Paul wrote. That is what it means to be a ‘pilgrim’.

The elect - born of God; walking in the obedience of their name

‘To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect

according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.’ 1Pe 1:1.

This statement is beautiful because *everybody* was to be elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. These people were obtaining their sonship. They were ‘the elect’ because they were born of God and were walking in the way that the Father predestined for them.

Receiving the sanctification of the Spirit, leading to obedience; the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ

‘Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit [for what purpose?], for obedience [the will of God being done] and *the sprinkling of blood of Jesus Christ*.’

This is the sprinkling of His blood *on our heart*, cleansing us from an evil conscience.

An ‘evil conscience’ is us bearing witness by the use of our own view of good and evil. When we live by that understanding of good and evil, we can do nothing but to live by a lie, which keeps us in bondage to these very sinful practices.

We have to receive the sanctification of the Spirit, leading to obedience; and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Sanctification of the Spirit

So, what is ‘the sanctification of the Spirit’?

It is the means by which we *fulfil* the will of God on earth.

Remember, ‘This is the will of God, your sanctification’. The sanctification of the Spirit is the process by which we are able to fulfil the will of God on earth, which *has been done in heaven*.

The will of God in heaven, and how it is done on earth

Before we comprehend how we *participate* in this sanctification of the Spirit, it is important for us to understand the distinction between what the will of God in heaven is, and how it is done on earth.

Helpfully, that is exactly what the apostle John did as he addressed this very subject, explaining what it means to pray, ‘*Your will be done*, on earth as it is in heaven.’

John said, ‘For whatever is born of God overcomes the world [that is said point blank – whatever is

born of God overcomes the world]. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.

'Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He who *came by water and blood*.' IJn 5:4-6.

So, what does it mean to 'believe that Jesus is the Son of God'?

Is it merely the comprehension or acceptance that Jesus is the Son of God? No.

It is *believing that He is the One who came by water and blood*. That is John's answer to that question.

His will done on earth; the sanctification of the Spirit

'This is He who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And *it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth*.

'For there are Three that bear witness in heaven [This is 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven']: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these Three are one. And there are *three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water* [the word of the Father], and *blood* [The *zoe* life which was in the blood of Jesus. This is the life that is to become our life.]; and these three agree as one.

'If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe in God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.' IJn 5:6-10.

In this passage, we discover what the sanctification of the Spirit is.

This is how the will of God done in heaven is being fulfilled in our life; and how we are both being delivered from our slavery to unrighteousness, and being made slaves of righteousness, the fruit of which is sanctification.

Those who are born of God, living by the life of Christ, overcome the world

In this regard, John said, 'Whatever is born of God *overcomes the world*'.

The implication of this statement is that those who do not overcome the lusts of the flesh, which

belong to the world, fail to enter the kingdom of heaven as those who are born of the Spirit.

Now, *overcoming* belongs to a son of God who *abides in Christ*, and *in whom Christ abides*.

This person *lives by Christ's life*, by the *faith* that comes by hearing the word.

A person is disconnected from this sanctifying process because they give up the word of truth which is spoken through Christ's messengers, for a lie.

The faith that we receive is the faith that we exercise; our faith

Overcoming belongs to a son of God who lives by Christ's life; by the faith that comes by hearing the word.

And it has become *their* faith through the Spirit. That's what Paul said. John said, 'And this is the victory that overcomes the world, *our faith*'.

So, that faith that we receive is the faith that we exercise.

And we can only exercise it if we 'own' it; if it is ours.

Believing that He is the Son of God – believing that He comes by water and blood

So, what does 'the exercise of the faith of the Son of God', which has become 'our' faith mean?

By this faith, we *believe that Jesus is the Son of God*.

And what does it mean to 'believe that Jesus is the Son of God'?

It is to believe that *He comes by water and blood!*

And *the Spirit bears witness* to the water and the blood. As the word is spoken, He brings the water and blood to you so that *you can believe* that He is coming to you in those elements.

By this, we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, from whom flows a fountain for cleansing and for life. He is coming to them by water and blood.

That is exactly what John said. He said, 'Who is he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He who came by water and blood.'

John said that, when that water and blood came from Jesus' side, it was the fulfilment of the Scripture in Zechariah that said, 'They will look on Me whom they have pierced'. Zec 12:10. And

from His side will flow a river or ‘a fountain ... for sin and uncleanness’. Zec 13:1.

That is what we see when we *believe in the Son of God*.

So we receive this provision for cleansing and life *through the witness of the Spirit*.

To do that, we have to *receive the word*. And we have to look and see how we have pierced Christ, through our sin and uncleanness, to receive that witness of the Spirit.

The will of God in heaven fulfilled on earth, in us, by the offering of Their life

So, how does this become reality in our lives? The answer is, when the Father’s will is fulfilled in us as it is in heaven.

That was the next point that John made. He said, ‘There are Three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.’

This describes the order of life by which Their Everlasting Covenant, which was established through Their offering, before creation, *proceeds from Their fellowship to us*.

John was deliberate in the order in which he placed these things. When he said, ‘The will of God being done in heaven’, he listed it as ‘the Father, the Son, or the Word, and the Holy Spirit’.

This is the order of life that is the outcome of Their offering, by which Their life, of which the Father is the source, and has committed it to the Son, is then given to us by the Holy Spirit.

This is the full and finished provision for our glorification as sons of God, who live in Their fellowship as members of the body of Christ.

That is, He has *perfected that forever*. So, that is ‘the will of God in heaven’.

Now, the *finished* will of God comes to pass in our lives, on earth, by Spirit, water and blood. So, there is an order *in heaven*.

And there is an order by which that will is being fulfilled in our lives, *on earth*. And that is *by* Spirit, water and blood.

In the coming weeks, we will speak about this process in much more detail. This is actually quite the central point of how we obtain our inheritance as a son of God.

The will of God done – the initiative of the Spirit

Now I will summarise the key principles, and we will continue to discuss them together.

This point about *the will of God being done in our lives* – in Their order – is that it is the Spirit who has the initiative.

It is the Spirit, water and blood.

The Spirit applies the water of the word and the sprinkling of Christ’s blood to our lives, for both cleansing and life.

In this, we see that when we accept a lie and live by a lie, we are resisting the Holy Spirit. That is a stiff-necked and hard-hearted response to the word, because the word itself is proclaimed by messengers who are full of the Holy Spirit, so that the message is actually from the Holy Spirit.

The provision of the Spirit in bearing witness that we are sons of God

It is the Spirit who applies the water of the word and the sprinkling of Christ’s blood to our lives, for cleansing and for life. He does this in the most amazing and comprehensive way.

I will list the provision of the Spirit as summary points, and we will take some time in the coming weeks to look at this.

The first way in which He does it is by *proclaiming the word to us through the ministry of Christ’s messengers*. 1Pe 1:12.

The next element is that *He bears witness that we are sons of God* by *convicting us of sin, righteousness and judgement*. Rom 8:16. Joh 16:8-9.

Third, *He enables our participation in the fellowship of the presbytery*, which is the fellowship of the Father and the Son. 1Jn 1:1-3. 1Co 6:17. 1Co 12:13. Php 1:27-30.

The fourth element is that *He is guiding us in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings as a daily walk*. This is ‘He will lead you into all truth’. Joh 16:13. Rom 8:16.

Receiving the witness of men – His messenger administration

John explained that to avail ourselves of this provision, we must first ‘receive the witness of men’.

After explaining ‘the will in heaven’ and ‘the will on earth’, he said, ‘If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.’

These are messengers – ‘the witness of men’ refers to messengers who are set apart by God as part of a star in the right hand of Christ; and these ones are full of the Holy Spirit.

Through their ministry, Christ is publicly portrayed as crucified among their hearers.

In a synopsis of this point, Jesus spoke to the disciples just before His ascension. He said, ‘But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you [the baptism of the Holy Spirit]; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’ Act 1:8.

So John was talking about receiving this messenger administration – ‘the witness of men’.

When we receive the witness of men, we receive the witness of God in ourselves – the Holy Spirit

And he said that when we receive their witness, we receive a *greater* witness. This is ‘the witness of God’.

We know that the witness of God is the Holy Spirit, because John said that Jesus Christ not only came by water, but by water and blood, and it is the Spirit who *bears witness*.

So, if we receive the witness of men, we receive a greater witness, which is the Holy Spirit. This is ‘the witness of God’.

Now, this is a most important point – ‘the greater witness’ is not an ‘alternative’ to ‘the witness of men’.

Another way of saying it is: you cannot receive the greater witness *unless* you receive the witness of men.

But, having received the witness of men, you will have a greater witness *in yourself*. That is the Holy Spirit who bears witness to you, confirming that word and covenant with you, so that you *know*, not because of your association with someone else, but because, by one Spirit, you are joined to the Lord and to your brethren.

That is a beautiful promise – the witness of God in yourself.

Believe in the Son; draw near to Him

It is evident that we have received this greater witness *because* we believe in the Son of God. And, as we noted earlier, this means that we are *drawing near to Christ*, where the blood and water, described as being a fountain for uncleanness and for life is effective in our lives.

We do not draw back in shame and fear in order to conceal our condition. We would do that if we chose the lie, wouldn’t we? We would choose all sorts of things to try to conceal our condition.

But when the word of the Lord comes to us, and Christ’s eyes pierce our heart, we draw near to that witness. And we receive the Holy Spirit as ‘a greater witness’ within us.

He takes that provision, which is water and blood, and applies it to our lives for both cleansing and life, for you to do the works of your sonship. That is surely a great witness.

‘Drawing near’, then, is first receiving and believing the word spoken by Christ’s messengers as the truth – as the *truth!*

We continue to draw near, or to abide, by *walking in the light of the word* and having *fellowship* with our brethren. IJn 1:7.

Our connection to fellowship

Now, this fellowship includes the *presbytery*. It is *in our houses* – we ‘walk in the light’, devotionally, in our houses. And it is *from house to house*.

It is not one or the other.

If you are receiving this word and drawing near to Christ, you will be *connected to fellowship in these three ways*.

It’s actually four ways, because we *personally* draw near to God in our own prayer and devotional life.

And then, ‘drawing near’ is *our fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ*.

So, ‘drawing near’ is our own devotional application. Then it’s walking in the light and having fellowship with our brethren, which is the presbytery, which is our families, our households. And then it’s house to house. And then, having the same spirit of faith, we present ourselves for fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, where those elements are becoming our life.

The witness of the Spirit; the conviction of the Spirit

Remember that if we have the witness of the Spirit in us, we will draw near.

Describing this witness, Paul wrote, ‘The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God’. Rom 8:16.

As Paul explained, ‘It is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.’

And John said, ‘If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has this witness in himself [has the Holy Spirit].’

Now Paul is saying, ‘This is what it looks like when the Spirit is in you. Because you have become a temple for the Holy Spirit, He is now bearing witness to you.’

‘The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together with Him.’ Rom 8:16-17.

The witness of the Spirit in you does *not* mean that the Holy Spirit is being like a cheerleader, saying, ‘Yes! You’re a son of God! Yes! You’re a son of God!’

The witness of the Holy Spirit within you is *the conviction of the Spirit*.

He is convicting of sin. He is convicting of righteousness, which are the works of your sonship that belong to you in Christ. And He is convicting you of judgement. That is the judgement that we make that, if One died for all, then all died, or are joined to the fellowship of that offering and sufferings.

He does bear witness that we a son of God, if we indeed ‘suffer with Christ, that we may also be glorified together with Him’.

That statement is the doctrine of baptism, isn’t it? Paul said, ‘Don’t you know that when you were baptised into Christ, you were baptised into His death?’ Rom 6:1-11.

This is so that, as you are baptised, or conformed to His death, you might also be conformed to the likeness of His resurrection, or glorification.

That is what the Spirit is bearing witness to within us.

He is compelling us, or motivating us, or convicting us, bearing witness, that we are a son of God *as long as we walk in that fellowship, with Him*.

That was what Peter said to ‘the pilgrims’; and he is saying this to all those who are full of the Holy Spirit.

Enabled to walk in the Spirit as slaves of righteousness

So, when we have this witness within ourselves, we are able to walk in the Spirit, and we do not succumb to the lusts of the flesh, including sexual immorality.

Do you see that we don’t need all these ‘strategies’? They are helpful at some point, but if that’s all we live by, we are not walking in the Spirit.

Indeed, we are able to *present ourselves as slaves of righteousness*.

Paul said, ‘I say then: walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh [This is quite direct, isn’t it?]. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.’ Gal 5:16-18.

That works both ways. If we *choose a lie* over the word that is coming as a witness of God, by which we receive the witness of the Spirit, we will not be able to do anything other than sin.

However, if we will receive that witness, and not draw back from the eyes of the Lord, but will walk in the light of that word, the Spirit who is bearing witness in us is ‘greater’.

And we will not succumb to the desires of the flesh, because the Spirit is at odds with those in us. He is connecting us to a process by which we are being delivered from that slavery.

‘But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under Law [and its judgement and its wrath].’ Gal 5:18. That is a great mercy, isn’t it?

Remember, we are those who fear God and who are nailed, conformed, constrained to the liberty of our sonship in Christ.

It is ‘the perfect law of liberty’. It is ‘the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus’.

No longer living by our own law; slaves of His righteousness

Addressing the implications of no longer living under the Law, Paul explained that this does not mean that we are free to do whatever we want. That is not what it means to 'live under Law'.

It means that we are free from the pursuit of righteousness *through the Law*, which we inevitably do when we live by our own law.

By our own law, we see that the Law is good, from our perspective of good and evil, and we reach for it to save our own life. That is the mechanism of the fear of death; not the fear of the Lord.

Paul said, 'Well, if you are not under Law anymore, does that mean that you can do whatever you like?' Obviously, the answer is 'no'.

In this regard, Paul said, 'What then? Shall we sin because we are not under Law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you *present* yourselves as *slaves to obey*?' Rom 6:15-16.

Obedience is in relation to a command. It is in relation to a word.

What word are you presenting yourself to? That is the question that we all have to ask, as those who are looking to enter His rest.

'Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves *slaves to obey*, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of *obedience leading to righteousness*? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin.' Rom 6:15-17.

Remember that this other law *was* the principle of your life. The other law brings us into bondage to the law of sin.

'Though you were a slave of sin, yet you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.' Rom 6:17.

Something has happened to our heart so that we are no longer a slave to sin. Circumcision is happening in our heart. We have become a captive to another doctrine. This is the doctrine of baptism!

This is the Spirit bearing witness with your spirit that you are a son of God, '*if indeed* you will suffer

with Him, that you may also be glorified with Him'.

This is the new captivity for us! This is a captive who is now a slave of righteousness.

Obeying from our heart through mourning with a broken heart

So, we are able to obey from the heart the form of doctrine to which we are being delivered when, *only* through mourning. As those who are broken-hearted, the Lord breaks the power of the other law within us.

We need to press in when that word pierces us, and we see the wickedness of our heart. Then we cry out - the Spirit helps us by causing us to see our sin - and we begin to mourn as the broken-hearted.

Our comfort is that the Lord begins to break that law within us, so that our heart can be healed.

Remember, this principle of the other law within us is making us sin-sick. So the healing of our heart requires an operation, a circumcision, a cutting off of the flesh. The Lord breaks the power of the other law within us.

Delivered to the doctrine of baptism; fellowship in His death and resurrection; circumcision

The doctrine to which we are delivered by the Holy Spirit is the doctrine of baptism. This is *fellowship in the death and resurrection of Jesus*.

In this fellowship, we are able, by faith, to *present ourselves* for the will of God. This is the confession of one who says, 'Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'

We are able to present ourselves for the will of God. That is, we are motivated and able to do the works that belong to our sonship, as a father or a mother, a husband or a wife, a brother or sister, a student, a worker.

Whatever it is, we accept that we have the capacity *in the Spirit* to do the things that are before us to do.

And all those other things that we may become ensnared by are all *alternatives to obedience*.

Now, baptism is not a sacrament, in the same way that circumcision should not have been a sacrament for the Jews.

The principle of baptism and circumcision is the same. In fact, Paul put the two together. He called baptism ‘the circumcision of Christ’. Col 2:11. So the principles of baptism and circumcision are the same.

God circumcises our heart by His Spirit. It is a sanctifying work of the Spirit so that we can fulfil God’s will, righteousness is being revealed, and the gospel is being lived.

Present yourself; the fervent love of the brethren

Paul then, said, ‘And having been set free from sin, *you became slaves of righteousness*. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves for uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness [‘lawlessness’ is the exercise of our other law].’ Rom 6:18-19.

Now that you are receiving the word, and you have the witness of the Spirit in yourself, ‘*present your members as slaves of righteousness for sanctification*’. Rom 6:19.

‘This is the will of God, your sanctification.’

You present yourself for this!

Summarising this principle, the apostle Peter wrote, ‘Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.’ 1Pe 1:22-23.

Now, we can turn this around and say, ‘Because you have been born of God, born of the Spirit, you are now able to purify your souls as you are obedient, because you are joined to the sanctifying work of the Spirit.’

In the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings, those elements of water and blood are coming and being applied to your life as cleansing sprinkling.

But they are also *becoming your life*, the evidence of which is you presenting yourself as a living sacrifice to make offering and to reveal another. That is ‘fervent love for the brethren’.

Praise the Lord! That is what the Lord is restoring to us. That is how we live each day as those who

are ‘being sanctified.’ And Paul said that the end of this process is eternal life. Praise the Lord!