

RESTORATION THROUGH THE CROSS

Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery fellowship word, 19 September 2021

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Introduction

Hello, everyone. In our last session, we considered the amazing restoration of Mary and her household, through 'the sword' that pierced through her soul. We know that this was the impact of *the word of the cross* upon her, and upon her house. As she received Christ's word from the cross, and then looked on Him whom she had pierced through her fallen endeavours to cultivate her house and her children in her own image, she was delivered from this fallen desire.

The fruit of this deliverance was the establishment of Mary and her sons in *the fellowship of faith with the presbytery*, which is the fellowship of *the Father and the Son*.

They were no longer outside of that fellowship, as they once had been. Instead, they were now joined to the travail of Christ as sons of God and as members of His body.

In Adam, the desire for rulership replaced the desire of love

In our session today, we will consider this process further, using the restoration of Adam as the context for our discussion.

As we have previously considered, Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because he desired to be 'like the angels'. He wanted to be mighty in strength and power and wisdom.

This desire for *dominance or rulership* over the contexts of his life became the expression of 'another law' within him. This 'other law' was a desire that was *other than* the fervent desire of love, which is demonstrated when a person *lays down their life* for another.

Adam ate the fruit in order to have life in a particular way, according to *his* perspective regarding what was good or evil for himself. This was *another principle of life* that was other than the law of love – the life and culture of Yahweh.

Death replaced life in the heart of every man - a driving law to fill the void

We know that prior to the Fall, God said to Adam that in the day that he ate the fruit of the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil, he would die. Gen 2:17.

We know, of course, that Adam and Eve did not physically drop dead the moment that they put that fruit in their mouth! Rather, as we have been considering over these last couple of weeks, the *death* that was established within them, and in all the sons and daughters who would be born after them, was the *corruption of desire*.

The 'other law' – which is a 'desire' – is other than *true* desire. True desire is the desire for *participation in the fellowship of Yahweh*, which is the expression of *love*, demonstrated by laying down our lives for another. True desire was *corrupted* within them, and it became *another law*.

When we speak of a 'law', we are referring to a 'principle'. This desire, or principle of life, is a *void* within the heart of a person, which they are driven to fill in the vain pursuit of *life*.

However, this pursuit is based on a *lie*, so that the more we try to obtain life this way, the less we are able to find it. We are thus driven all the more, and we come *into bondage* to this way of life.

The apostle John described this drive to fill the void and to have life this way, as 'lust'. He described it as 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life'. 1Jn 2:16.

The years of our life – a period of grace in which to be restored to the Lord

Although Adam and Eve's mortal bodies did not immediately die the moment that they ate the fruit and disconnected themselves from the life and fellowship of Yahweh, their mortal bodies did *begin to deteriorate*.

From that moment, the years that remained of their mortal life became a *period of grace* that was granted by the Lord in order for them to return to Him.

They should have, and could have, died *the moment that they ate*. However, this death was established *within* them. The death that the Lord was referring to was irrespective of whether the *mortal* body was alive or expired. Gen 2:17.

The fact is that the Lord Himself preserved their body, as an extension of His *grace*, in order to give them *time to repent* – time to be *recovered* to His predestination for them, and to find *deliverance* from the *principle of death* that had now been worked in them.

This was the case not just for Adam and Eve – this is true for *all of mankind*. The time we have in our mortal bodies is *grace* given to us, *to every person*, to give us opportunity to be *restored* to the Lord; to be *delivered* from this principle of death; and to obtain that which the Father has predestined for each one in Christ – that is, to obtain our *sonship*.

This is what the apostle Paul explained when he proclaimed the gospel to the Athenians on Mars Hill. Paul said, ‘And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth [He was referring to *everybody* who has come from Adam.], and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings.’ Act 17:26.

This is an amazing statement! This is true for *every person*. The ‘preappointed times’ is the *time* available to them to be restored to Him.

And ‘the boundaries of their dwellings’ is the *context* in which that is to happen.

‘Their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings [For what reason?], so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, “For we are also His offspring.”’ Act 17:26-28.

What a beautiful passage this is, in light of the fact that there was a fall; but that God’s grace has then been extended to mankind, to appoint to them *time*, and a *place*, in which they can seek the Lord, and find Him, and be *restored to His plan* for them.

That restoration is our subject today.

The Lord defines the context for our recovery to the predestination

The Lord extended this mercy to Adam by first identifying Adam’s sin, and then defining for him the *context* of his life, *through which* he would fulfil his predestination as a son of God.

Do you see that Adam’s recovery was not back to the tree of life? The recovery was back to a

predestination that would be obtained on *the ground* that *the Lord defined* for Adam.

This is an important point, and highlights the very thing that Paul said on Mars Hill. This was the ‘preappointed time’ for Adam; and it was also ‘the boundary of their dwelling’.

This is what the Lord said to Adam: ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat of it”: Cursed is the ground for your sake [or, ‘for your benefit’].’ Gen 3:17.

What would the only benefit for a person be? It would be to obtain the *treasure*, the *perfect expression* of their identity, which is defined *by the Father* through the word of their *name*.

When the Lord said ‘for your sake’, He was not saying ‘so that you will have a good life’. He was saying ‘so that you will *obtain the perfect will of God*’. That is beautiful, isn’t it! That is the meaning of ‘for your sake’.

We will read it again. ‘Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.’ Gen 3:17.

The Lord was saying, ‘That is the context for your dwelling. Your work – the work associated with the word – which is for your sake, is to *toil*, is to labour. And on this ground, which I have *appointed* for you, and on which I am telling you, “You are to do this, this and this”, both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth *for you*.’ Gen 3:18.

‘Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.’ Gen 3:18-19.

Accepting the curse as for our sake – the context through which we inherit our sonship

Note that the Lord said to Adam that the ground was cursed *because he had rejected the headship of Christ*.

That is exactly what He said. ‘Because you heeded the voice of your wife.’

Adam had turned his face *away* from the headship of Christ, to receive the word, or provision, or food, from his wife, Eve. This was the issue that resulted in this sin and the context in which he now found himself.

However, the ground was cursed *for his sake*. He was cursed because he had turned his face away from the headship of Christ.

Wonderfully, the cursing was *now for his sake* in relation to his *restoration* to the headship of Christ.

The point to recognise is that Adam needed to *accept* the curse as a *condition* of the labour, or works, which God had prepared for him, so that he could be *restored* to the *sonship life*, to which he had been *predestined by the Father*.

This is a key point. We must *accept the curse* as a *condition* of the labour and works by which we are *progressively obtaining this inheritance*.

Fallen man seeks to dominate the curse in order to find life

The alternative to this was to endeavour to *dominate the curse*, through the pursuit of wisdom and strength and power, which Adam had originally coveted, when he ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The tree of life was, actually, *the word proceeding* from the tree of life through the angels, to Adam, saying, 'Adam, this is now your work.'

He could be obedient to that word; or he could turn from it, and say, 'No, there is a better fruit! There is *another* word; and I can *obtain life by dominating* the curse. In fact, the evidence of obtaining that life will be my *overcoming of these thorns and thistles*!'

Living to overcome the curse is a fallen wisdom

Living according to this way is based in a '*wisdom*' that is *at odds* with the word of the cross.

What was coming to Adam from the Lord in this initial interaction was *the word of the cross*. Remember that the cross establishes *both* the cursing and the blessing.

Living in this fallen way is 'a wisdom'.

James declared: that it is wisdom that is *earthy*. It is formed from the best reasoning of those who are created from the earth, or from the dust – so, it is earthy. It is *sensual* – so, it will *feel* real, and feel like the right way to go. And it is *demonic* – so, if we pursue that way of living, and trust in our *own* earthy understanding, we come under the oppression of Satan. That is what James was

saying. 'This wisdom is earthy, sensual and demonic.' Jas 3:15.

Further – this is an amazing verse! – it belongs to those who are full of '*envy and self-seeking*'. Jas 3:14,16.

Why is that important? It is important because *envy* is connected to *covetousness* – and Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because they *coveted life in a particular way*.

The point is, that the pursuit of that way of living is this *fallen wisdom*.

Living according to fallen wisdom

What does it 'look like' to live according to this wisdom and to *reject* the word which is saying, 'Cursed is the ground *for your sake*'?

The ground is cursed for *all mankind*. 'From *one blood*', He has made every nation of men to dwell on the earth. Act 17:26. The curse to which Adam and Eve were subjected was the *same curse* that is experienced by *everyone*.

Prompted by this fallen wisdom, those who are experiencing the *pain of 'thorns and thistles'* endeavour to *overcome their distress* through the cares of this life, through the pursuit of riches, through the desires for other things, and through the pursuit of pleasures. Mar 4:18-19. Jas 4:1,3.

James said that living this way gives rise to *confusion*. Jas 3:16. This means that the sight, or *perspective*, of someone who is walking this way is completely *deluded*.

He said that it gives rise to 'confusion and *every evil thing*'. Jas 3:16. So, pursuing this way brings us under the *law of sin*.

Thorns – the distresses that emerge in the context of our work

It is important to note that 'the cares of this life', 'the pursuit of riches', 'the desires for other things' and 'the pursuit of pleasure', which I am sure you are connecting with 'thorny ground', *are not the thorns*.

The 'thorns' are the *distresses* that emerge in the context of our work.

The *responses* of pursuing pleasure or pursuing riches are our endeavour to *offset the pain*, or to reduce the pain, of those thorns. They are not the thorns. They are *the responses* that we make to the effect of the thorns in our lives.

Our responses to mitigate the impact of the curse direct us away from the fulfilment of our sonship

Importantly, when we pursue those things, we are being redirected *away from our obedience*.

This is how the seed is 'choked' and 'dies'. Mar 4:19.

It is because we are pursuing *something else* – pursuits which redirect us *from* the works of sonship that belong to our name, and are only fulfilled *in the fellowship of Christ's offering*, which includes His *sufferings*.

The nature, evidence and outcome of thorny ground responses

This does *not* mean that we should not recreate or that we should not enjoy life. I am *not* saying, 'Don't go to the beach for a holiday'!

It means that we do not engage in these pursuits in order *to escape the rigours* and distress that is associated with the context of our work.

Neither are we pursuing them because, in our work, which is a toil and difficult, we think we '*deserve it*'.

If we view our life, or these pleasures, or the pursuit of riches, or the desires for 'stuff', as 'we deserve it, because we work hard', we are *thorny ground*, and we are *falling away*.

Further, if we are pursuing these things to overcome the distress of life, and we are being *successful*, then we are no different from a 'flower of the field' that emerges and has its *own* glory which *fades away*. 1Pe 1:24.

Rather, we want to be those who are living by an *enduring and eternal seed* – that is, an incorruptible seed; those who are being born again and are *bringing forth fruit, irrespective of the conditions* in which it is emerging.

Neither are we pursuing this relief through activities that are an *alternative* to the *fellowship of the word*.

We sometimes hear of people who are 'taking a holiday' from the *agape* meal, because they have a busy and demanding program. The effect of this type of thinking is to cause the *life*, which is the life of your *sonship*, to *progressively become weak*.

But these things are not our focus.

The Lord's recovery of Adam and Eve to relationship with Himself

We will focus now on Adam's *obtaining his sonship* by *accepting* the cursed conditions of his work context.

First, however, let's consider how the Lord *recovered* Adam and Eve, firstly *to Himself*.

When they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve were *dead*. 'In the day that you eat of it, you will die.' Gen 2:17.

Then they *hid themselves* from the Lord – they *separated themselves* from Him. Gen 3:8. Remember that the Lord God was walking in the cool of the evening, in the garden, and said, '*Where are you?*' The whole of humanity had been lost. Gen 3:9. Rom 5:12.

Having proclaimed the curses upon the sons and daughters of disobedience, the Lord God then made tunics of skin to clothe Adam and Eve. Gen 4:16-21.

The tunics which He provided for them were supplied through the death of animals. A *sacrifice* was made, and the skins of these animals became the garments that *the Lord* fashioned to clothe Adam and Eve.

He *replaced*, with these garments, the garments that *they* had made, which were fig leaves. These fig leaves were *projections* to cover the shame of their nakedness. Gen 3:7. He said, 'Do not wear projections to cover the shame of your nakedness. Wear the clothes which *I am giving to you*.'

By *sacrificing* these animals, the Lord provided for the *recovery* of Adam and Eve to *relationship* with Himself.

Presenting ourselves for fellowship and offering in the garments the Lord provides

In addition, Adam and Eve were *clothed* with the garments that *the Lord* gave them.

The Scriptures teach us that the garments that come *from Him* to us, are called '*garments of salvation*.' Isa 61:10-11.

They were the clothes in which they were to *present themselves*, by *offering*, for *fellowship in the word* of Yahweh at the gate of Eden – the context for fellowship with Him, which we know is an *agape meal*.

The important thing is that He clothed them this way, *so that* they could present themselves *for this fellowship*, at the gate of Eden, *so that* their daily activities were a *participation* in the works of sonship that had already been *perfected* and finished for them, through the *offering of Christ*.

Do you see the point? They actually had to *present themselves* to make offering at the gate of Eden – their *agape* meal – so that the daily activities that they were doing were actually a *participation* in the fellowship of *that* offering, which they had partaken of; and were a *progressive sanctification*, by which they were *fulfilling* what He had already perfected for them through the offering of Christ.

In this regard, we can liken their garments to the mandate, or authority, for this *priestly service*. What is the priestly service? It is to ‘present *yourself* a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable’. Rom 12:1.

Wearing the correct garments is fundamental to this service, which is participation in the *fellowship of the Lord’s house*.

The garments He gives us bear the mandate for our works, replacing our projections

They could not, through their own *projections*, fulfil the works that were prepared for them to do. Do you see the point – *He* made clothes for them, to *replace* the fig leaves, which were projections.

He was saying, ‘Do not come before Me like that! You must come in the garments that I give you; and these garments are a *mandate*, or an *authority*, which is associated with your *name*.’

The projections that they fashioned were connected to the desire to *name themselves*; to present themselves according to their *own* design, and their *own* expectations of what God would want from them.

It was a delusion. They could not fulfil the works that were prepared for them to do, through their projections.

Relinquishing our projections to participate authentically in the fellowship of the body

We will explore further this point about garments and ensuring that we are wearing the right ones.

We will probably know well the account from Matthew Chapter 22, but it is helpful to look at it in light of what the Lord did to Adam and Eve.

‘So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.’ Mat 22:10.

That sounds rather like ‘the gospel net’ going out into the sea of the peoples, and bringing up ‘fish’ which are both good and bad. Mat 13:47-48. Remember – this is the work of the *presbytery*.

Another way of saying it is that this is the initiative of Christ, through a presbytery, to gather the peoples to Himself, in the same way that He did Adam and Eve. He found them in the garden, *hidden and lost* from Him, and He gathered them to Himself, and brought them to the *context of His fellowship*, which is a *meal*.

‘But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, “Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?” ’ Mat 22:11-12.

I love this! I love that he calls him his ‘friend’. This is a person who has *heard* the gospel call, and has *come in*.

Like Adam and Eve, he has come out from the bushes, and come to meet the Lord face to face. Here is the Lord with His friend.

“‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, “Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” For many are called, but few are chosen.’ Mat 22:12-14.

That is just about our worst nightmare, isn’t it! It is a little like turning up to school or to work or to church in your pyjamas, and not being able to explain how that happened! This man turned up at the wedding feast in the wrong garments, and said, ‘I don’t know what’s happened!’

The point is that the garment that you are wearing is really *important*.

The point is that this person *should have known* what the wedding garment was, because *Christ Himself* gives that garment to *each person*.

We must *relinquish* our projections, *particularly* in relation to our participation in the church and in the fellowship of the body, so that we are

appropriately clothed, and we are presenting ourselves according to a *mandate*, which we are *not* the source of.

That is how we receive the garments of salvation, so that we can participate *authentically* and *appropriately* in that *agape* meal, in this feast.

Redeemed to God's plan by grace from Christ's offering - obtaining our inheritance through the way of sanctification

Adam and Eve were clothed with the skins of a slain animal, and the blood of that animal was shed as an atonement for them to redeem them back to the Lord. Their sins were atoned for by the shedding of the animal's blood, through which they obtained forgiveness.

In this regard, the sacrifice of this animal was their *connection to the offering of Christ on the cross*, who was 'the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world'. Rev 13:8.

His offering on the cross is *the foundation* of the world. And its provision has been efficacious *from the beginning of history*, right through to the conclusion of this age – in fact, right through forever!

In this initial phase of God's lovingkindness and grace towards Adam and Eve, they were *redeemed to God's plan for them*, which Christ had already perfected for them.

But, now, through the *way of sanctification*, they had to *obtain* what He had finished for them – the works that He had already done for them.

Those works were a *ground* on which they were to toil, which would bring forth *thorns and thistles*, for *their sake*.

The *initial mercy* of God was to *bring them to Himself*, so that they could learn what the *context* was in which they were to obtain this inheritance.

This was a *prevenient provision of grace*, and granted them an *opportunity* to be *delivered* from the void which was now established in them – this *death* within – and to be *restored* by faith to the Father's predestination for them.

The Lord grants prevenient grace – the freedom and dignity of accountable choice

When we use the term 'prevenient', we mean that the grace which is ministered from the Lord *frees a person* from *any influence* that would otherwise affect

their capacity to choose what the Lord is saying to them.

Consider it this way: if we have another law within us, and it is the *only* motivation and orientation of our life, as soon as we hear the word, we will take that word to fulfil our *own* desires.

The prevenient grace of God *rolls that back for a moment* to give every person the *freedom* and the *dignity of choice*.

That is a wonderful thing! That is a highly dignifying initiative that the Lord takes towards us; but it also means that every person is *accountable* for that choice. And the way in which they choose to live is completely *unhindered* by any thing, other than what *they want*.

That is why the judgement of God is *without quarrel* – because a person has actually chosen what they are judged for: either *life*, because of obedience; or *death*, because they choose their own way.

These influences, which are *rolled back* by the lovingkindness of God, or this prevenient grace, include, for example, sin and its consequences for a person's life; personal histories and traditions; the other law; addictions; hurts; depression; protective reflexes; and even demonic oppression.

This all happens in this *prevenient phase*, which Jesus described as 'wayside ground'. In the coming weeks, we will discuss this further.

The word and fellowship of the presbytery - our context for offering and recovery to the fellowship of Yahweh

After ministering this prevenient grace from the offering of Christ, the Lord sent Adam and Eve *out of the garden* of Eden to fulfil the works that He had defined for them. This was the context of the curse, which was for their sake.

The Scriptures record that the Lord placed two 'cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life'. Gen 3:24.

The gate of Eden, at the feet of these two cherubim who were angels – the Greek word is literally 'aggelos' – was now the *context for Adam's fellowship with Yahweh*. It was at *this gate*, at the *feet of the cherubim* who had a *flaming sword* in their hand, that he had to *present himself* to have fellowship with Yahweh.

Adam's *connection* to the Lord was by offering at *these feet*, which he now understood was the *offering of the Lamb*.

Do you understand the point? The death of that animal, by which Adam and Eve were clothed, and the shedding of the blood of that animal, which was redeeming them back to relationship with God, was *their connection to the Lamb of God*, who was slain on the cross – this was 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world'.

Adam understood that this was his *connection to Yahweh; the fellowship from which he had fallen*.

The Lord spoke to Adam from the tree of life – which is the cross – *through the cherubim*, who represented the *aggelos* presbytery.

This is an amazing principle! The cherubim are there, and are *guarding the doorway* to the tree of life. We note that Jesus called the *overseers* of His house 'doorkeepers'. Joh 10:3. Remember that the overseers are the *aggelos* presbytery. They are the *doorkeepers* of their house.

They also proclaim *the word of the cross*. Paul declared, 'I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' 1Co 2:2. That is the word that the *aggelos* is proclaiming – the word of the cross, which is the *sword of the Spirit*.

This picture of Adam at the gate of Eden is actually a picture of *the redemption of the whole of mankind*. 'From one blood came all the nations.' Adam was finding what we all find, in terms of our *recovery back to the fellowship of Yahweh*.

We also know that, in the early church, when the church was first established, the believers *brought their offerings* to the *feet of the apostles*.

Do you see that Adam was bringing his offering to the feet of the cherubim; and that that is actually the *ground of fellowship of the presbytery*. The apostle John said that their fellowship was 'with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ'. 1Jn 1:3.

Adam could be restored to fellowship with Yahweh every day, as long as *that was the context for offering*, and he made that particular offering.

The sword - the word of the cross – removing the flesh and opening fellowship with Yahweh

The 'flaming sword' is the *effect of the word of the cross* ministered by Christ's messengers; and it is a *two-edged sword*. Heb 4:12.

The beautiful thing about the sword is that it limits, or restricts, any access to the tree of life, *based on the flesh*.

However, when we allow that sword to *pierce our heart* and to expose the thoughts and intents of our heart, that 'desire' – the void that is between soul and spirit; *right in the centre of our being* – can be *cut off*.

We can then *join* the fellowship of Yahweh, because the other law is being removed from us, and the Holy Spirit is pouring the law of love into us.

The sword, which is getting rid of the flesh, is also cutting us *into* that fellowship.

As we remain connected to the headship of Christ, the thorns of the curse are for our sake

As Adam made offering on this ground, and received the word of the Lord through His messengers, he *maintained his connection to the headship of Christ*.

Remember that he had gone into outer darkness, because of his *rejection* of the headship of Christ.

Now he was being brought near, being restored to the fellowship, or to the headship, of Christ, by making offering on this ground of the angels, or the *aggelos*; *by receiving the word which is a flaming sword*; and by being reconnected to the headship of Christ.

Through this connection, as he was making offering and being reconnected with Yahweh at an *agape* meal, the thorns representing the curse on mankind because of disobedience, were *now for his sake*.

The thorns and thistles on the ground of our work will be 'for our sake' *only if we are connected to the headship of Christ*. If we are not connected to the headship of Christ, those thorns and thistles will be only the *foretaste of eternal damnation*; of eternal torment!

How do we know this? How do we know that Adam's *reconnection to the headship of Christ*, from

which he had fallen, meant that these thorns would now be for his sake?

Christ bore the thorns of the curse experienced by every person

We know that during Christ's offering journey a *crown of thorns* was placed on His head. These were *the thorns of the curse*, resulting from *mankind's rejection of His headship*.

As Jesus received this fifth wound, He was suffering the *effect of the curse* that is experienced by *every person*. 'Thorns and thistles' come up on the 'ground' of every person.

Because of mankind's rejection of Christ, *He* was now being crowned with these thorns, and was *enduring the effect* of that curse, tasting the same death that everyone tastes – not just 'generically'. He was tasting *your* thorny experiences, and *my* thorny experiences. He suffered the effects of the curse that are experienced by *every person*.

Through this suffering, *the pride of mankind*, which motivated them to *reject* Christ's headship and to seek dominion through the exercise of their *own* strength, power and wisdom, was being *circumcised from Him*.

Joined to His cursing in the fellowship of His offering, we are delivered from death to love

So, *if we are joined to Him*, the pain of those thorns is a *circumcision* that is happening to us, *delivering us from that desire*. That is the curse 'for your sake'.

The curse, represented by the crown of thorns on the head of Christ, was then *gathered up to the cross* when Jesus was crucified.

This is the only thing that He took with Him – *a crown of thorns*. Where did He take it? He took it right to Calvary when He was *lifted up on the cross*.

How do we know that the curse of the thorns was now gathered up into the cross? We know because Paul made the point that 'cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'. Gal 3:13.

We note Paul's words, 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree").' For what purpose? 'That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, through faith.' Gal 3:13-14.

Do you see that the inheritance, the promise of being a son of God, is because *you are joined to that cursing*?

The word that proceeds from Christ through the ministry of an *aggelos* presbytery in His right hand *pierces* a person's heart, and *equips* them with *faith* for *their fellowship in that offering*.

The evidence of this is that their confession is, 'I have been *crucified with Christ*. It is no longer I who live.' I no longer pursue life through the exercise of my knowledge of good and evil. That is dying.

'It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live, I live by the faith that comes in that word of the cross, every time I present myself for offering.' That is the confession of Galatians 2:20.

By this faith, confessing that they have been crucified with Christ, the believer no longer lives by *their* life; nor do they *presume* to have life through their own strength, through the pursuit of riches, through the desires for other things, or through pleasure.

Do you see that *that desire* within us is part of the *death*? We are being *delivered* of that death, so that we are *not trying to conquer* the curse through these ways of alleviating its pain.

We *accept* that we have a fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, whereby this sword is now *delivering us of this very void*, this very desire.

And we are being restored to the *fellowship of first love*, which is a vehement flame. It is the *desire of love itself*.

The mark of Adam's relationship with Christ was his *application* to tilling the ground according to the word of the Father; and his *acceptance of the thorns* – that the thorns in the context of his work, were for his sake.

Thorns in the ground of our families – recovery through remaining obedient to the word

I want to make the point that the ground of Adam's life, of his work, was *his family*. Remember that he was told to be fruitful and multiply. Part of his work was actually to bring forth these children.

I suspect that considerable prickliness and thorniness arose as these two boys were growing up.

There was probably also some prickliness and difficulty with Eve, who rejected the acceptance of the thorns as the principle of recovery. Remember that Eve was invested in Cain's being the one to *overcome* the curse.

There was doubtless conflict, or distress, within the ground of their family.

Instead of trying to dominate Eve, which would have been exercising the *flesh*, Adam accepted that these thorns were *part of the context of his ground*.

He accepted that the *recovery* of both he and his family, was to *remain obedient* to the word of the Lord, which was defining both the ground of his work and the nature of his works. He accepted that these thorns were the *context* of his recovery.

Finding life only in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings

Through this *package of offering and sufferings*, which Adam participated in by faith, he was *overcoming the Devil*, by the blood of the Lamb; through the expression of his testimony in *word and conduct* – he was actually doing the work; and by ceasing to *preserve his life* or to find life *any other way* than in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

The beautiful thing is that it appears that Adam did enter Christ's rest after he died, because he was identified by Luke as *a son of God* in the genealogy of Jesus. Luk 3:38.