

Following the Lamb to the springs of the water of life

Lachlan Perrin

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The One who came by water and blood

In today's notes, we are considering how the water of the word is ministered to us at *each* stage of Christ's offering journey. Eph 5:26. Eze 36:25. In our previous writings, we have largely focused on the seven sprinklings of Christ's *blood*, which were shed as a result of the sufferings that He experienced in each wounding event on the pathway to the cross. We note, however, the words of the apostle John, 'For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the One who came by *water and blood*, Jesus Christ; not with water only, *but with the water and with the blood.*' 1Jn 5:4-6. In this present season, there is an urgency in the Spirit for us to join the fellowship of Christ's offering so that we are participants in His overcoming.

When John said that Jesus 'came by water and blood', he was describing the pathway of salvation that Christ pioneered in His offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary. In his Gospel, John was careful to recount the detail of Christ's seventh wound. This final wound was the sum and fulfilment of Jesus' previous six wounding events. John specifically noted that after Jesus' death, 'One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood *and water* came out'. Joh 19:34. John had been granted, by illumination, to understand the spiritual reality of Christ's *whole* suffering journey. That is, Jesus 'came by water and blood' because *both* of these elements flowed forth at *every* wounding event that He experienced!

We recall, that in the garden of Gethsemane, the Father laid the sin and iniquity of mankind upon Jesus, causing Him to *become* sin for our sake. Isa 53:6,12. 2Co 5:21. As the great Shepherd of the sheep, Jesus found all those who were lost to God by joining us in our death and separation from the Father. As He knelt down and prayed, the Son of Man declared His obedience to the Father's will when He said, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done.' Luk 22:42. In response, the Father spoke the word of the Everlasting Covenant to Him, saying, 'You are My Son, *today* I have *begotten* You.' Heb 1:5. 'Today' refers to Christ's whole offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary. And Christ was *begotten* as the firstborn from the dead in the garden of Gethsemane by water and by blood. The 'water' refers to the word of the Everlasting Covenant and the 'blood' refers to the life of the Everlasting Covenant.

The water of the word that proclaimed the sonship of Christ was the *first* element of His rebirth. Having been born of water, the Son was then made alive from the death of sin, through the life that was in the blood of the New Covenant. Heb 13:20. Both of these elements were revealed in the garden of Gethsemane when Christ's sweat - the 'waters' of perspiration - *then* became as great drops of blood. Luk 22:44. As Christ's blood continued to be shed at each stage of His offering journey back to the Father, the water of the word was also ministered.

Earlier in His ministry, Jesus encountered a Samaritan woman by a well outside Sychar. He said to her, 'Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water *springing* up to eternal life.' Joh 4:14. Jesus gives us this water as we join Him, our Shepherd and Guide, in the fellowship of His journey to the cross. By faith, we must join every circumstance and experience in our life – whether joyous or adverse – to the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. As we do this, we find that He has turned every point of our suffering, every point of despair and distress, every experience of pain and hurt, and every betrayal and persecution to a spring of healing water. We read in the book of Revelation, 'The Lamb in the centre of the throne will be their Shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes'. Rev 7:17.

The valley of Baca

In the eighty-fourth Psalm there is a prophetic description of our pilgrimage as sons of God who are conformed to the likeness of Christ's death. Rom 6:5. We read there about those who journey with the Lord upon the pathway that leads to eternal life. 'My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.' Ps 84:2. A similar theme is found in Psalm forty-two, 'As the deer pants for the water brooks, so *my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God*'. Ps 42:1-2. Returning to Psalm eighty-four, we read in verses five and six, 'How blessed is the man whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. *Passing through the valley of Baca they make it a spring*'. Ps 84:5-6.

Other translations call the valley of Baca 'the valley of weeping', which means to 'lament or mourn with tears'. Concerning Christ's seventh and final wound, the Scripture reveals that a spirit of grace and supplication was also poured out upon those who were present at the cross when Christ's side was pierced with the soldier's spear. Zec 12:10. In Luke's Gospel, we read about the outcome of this outpouring. 'Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent". And all the crowds who came for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened [i.e. when they were illuminated by a spirit of grace and supplication], began to return, *beating their breasts*'. Luk 23:47-48. Beating their breasts was an action of mourning. The veil of their fleshly perspective concerning Jesus, a carpenter from Nazareth, had been drawn back and they were granted to behold and mourn for Christ, their Messiah, the One whom *they* themselves had pierced and murdered.

Today, the word of the cross is proclaimed to us as we participate in the communion meal with Christ and our brethren. As the word of present truth is declared by Christ's messengers, the Holy Spirit continues to pour out a spirit of grace and supplication upon us, enabling us to behold Christ lifted up and pierced through for our sakes. And when we turn and look upon Him in repentance, we see exactly what the apostle John saw; we see the elements of water and blood! The word of the Everlasting Covenant is being ministered to us as the proclamation and instruction of our sonship. And *exanastasis* life is being ministered to us in Christ's sprinkled blood, to become our life and capacity to fulfil our sonship in righteousness.

Like those who returned to their homes, beating their breasts after Christ's crucifixion, our fellowship with Christ is a mourning journey to our heavenly home. Christ died our death in the garden of Gethsemane, and our returning with Him to the Father is a fellowship in His death. But He turns our weeping for Him into a wellspring of healing water. At every point of our

participation in His sufferings, He turns the adversity of our mourning into the blessing of overcoming by water and by blood. King David wrote, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want [i.e. I shall not hunger or *thirst*], He makes me lie down in green pastures; *He leads me beside quiet waters* ... even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death [i.e. the valley of Baca], I fear no evil.' Psa 23:1-4.

In the beatitudes, Jesus described the process of turning our mourning into a spring. After instructing His disciples to mourn, as those who are poor in spirit, Jesus proceeded to say, 'Blessed are those who hunger and *thirst* for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.' Mat 5:3-4,6. As we, by water, blood and the witness of the Spirit inherit our sonship in Christ, our soul is indeed satisfied. The prophet Isaiah described our fellowship in Christ's death when he wrote, 'Jehovah shall always guide you and *satisfy your soul in dry places*, and make your bones fat; and you shall be like a watered garden, and *like a spring of water whose waters fail not*'. Isa 58:11. Further, the prophet Jeremiah described our participation in Christ's offering journey as a fellowship of weeping. He wrote, 'They shall come *with weeping*, and with prayers and I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way; they shall not stumble in it, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.' Jer 31:9.

The springs of the water of life

Our fellowship in Christ's offering is progressively causing the waters of everlasting life to spring up within us. Jesus said that the water He gives to us will become a well of water springing up to eternal life. Joh 4:14. When King David testified about following the Lord through the valley of the shadow of death, he said, 'My cup runs over.' Psa 23:5. Let us now briefly consider the nature of each spring of water that Christ has activated for our blessing, through each wounding event that He experienced.

Christ's *first wound* occurred in the garden of Gethsemane when, through the travail of prayer, the elements of water and blood were manifest physically in His sweat. We recall that Christ confessed His faith to obey the Father's will. In response, the Father declared the water of the word of Christ's sonship, proclaiming and affirming His offering and priestly work as the Son of Man. Jesus was then strengthened, by Eternal Spirit, so that He could travail in prayer to see the will of God done. This first springing forth of the water of life blessed mankind with the capacity of Eternal Spirit, which strengthens us to join and persevere in the travail of Christ's prayer. As we remain connected to the fellowship of Christ's prayer, we overcome our fleshly propensity to pursue our own will. Jeremiah described this propensity as a hopeless 'evil', when he prophesied, 'My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the *Fountain of living waters*, to hew out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.' Jer 2:13.

Christ's *second wound* occurred in the courts of the house of Caiaphas when He was bruised for our iniquities. Having followed Jesus to the house of Caiaphas, the disciple Peter was profoundly impacted as he watched Christ being punched, slapped and beaten. Earlier that night, Peter had self-righteously declared to Jesus, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.' Mat 26:35. Peter trusted in the integrity of his own heart, rather than in the words spoken by Jesus Himself, who had forewarned Peter that he would indeed deny Him not once, but three times. The Gospel of Luke states that when the rooster crowed, and the word of Christ was fulfilled, 'The Lord turned and looked at Peter.' Luk 22:61. In response to meeting Jesus eye to

eye, Peter 'went out and *wept bitterly*'. Luk 22:62. Peter received the blessing of the second spring of the water of life as he joined Christ's offering in a 'fellowship of tears'. This second spring of water blesses us with spiritual sight and discernment so that we can understand the true nature and condition of our self-righteous heart.

Christ's *third wound* also occurred in the house of Caiaphas when He was beaten with rods for our peace. We remember the account of Moses leading the nation of Israel through the wilderness. The people cried out to Moses in contention, saying, 'Why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us in to this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, *nor is there water to drink.*' Num 20:2-5. Moses responded in frustration, saying, ' "Listen now, you *rebels*; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck (i.e. beat) the rock twice *with his rod*; and *water came forth abundantly.*' Num 20:10-22. Isa 48:21. Referring to the wilderness account, the apostle Paul identified Christ as being the rock from which the nation of Israel drank. 1Co 10:4. He is the chief Cornerstone of the church. Eph 2:20. As Christ was beaten with rods in the house of Caiaphas, He activated a third spring of water, blessing mankind with the water of the word for our *disciplining*. The word that disciplines us cleanses us from the rebelliousness associated with our immaturity, enabling us to walk in the way of peace and discipleship.

Christ's *fourth wound* occurred in the presence of Pilate when He was scourged with the cat o' nine tails. This gruesome suffering caused multiple lacerations across Christ's body. As Christ turned this wounding event into a spring, the waters of regeneration began to flow for the healing of our spirit. Isa 53:5. Tit 3:5. When the water of Christ's word ministers healing to the many and varied identity frailties and points of lameness that have beset our fallen identity, we are hearing His voice 'like the sound of many waters'. Rev 1:15.

Christ's *fifth wound* occurred in the Praetorium when a crown of thorns was twisted together and placed upon His head. During this painful mockery of Christ's kingship, the soldiers sought to undermine His authority. We know, however, that this wounding event resulted in Christ receiving the true sceptre of rulership, depicted in the book of Revelation as the seven stars in His right hand. In the time of the end, Christ will use the seven stars in His right hand to express the authority of His kingship in all the world. The activation of this fifth spring signified Christ's rulership over all the peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues of the world, which are depicted as 'waters' in the book of Revelation. Rev 17:15. This spring of water blesses us with the authority of our name and the capacity, in Christ, to overcome all that is in the world. 1Jn 2:16.

Christ's *sixth wound* occurred when He was nailed to the cross. As He was pierced through for our transgressions, Christ abolished the Old Covenant and inaugurated the New Covenant of the Spirit. We read in the book of Hebrews, 'Therefore, when [Jesus] came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure." Then I said, 'Behold, I have come - in the volume of the book it is written of Me - *to do Your will*, O God.'" ' Heb 10:5-7. In the next verses of this same chapter, the apostle Paul pointed out that 'by this *will* we have been *sanctified* through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all'. Heb 10:10. Now that Christ has removed the Old Covenant, we must no longer strive for righteousness through the will of our flesh. Instead, the will of God for every believer *is* their sanctification. 1Th 4:3. Paul wrote to the

Ephesians, saying, 'Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might *sanctify her*, having cleansed her *by the washing of water with the word*'. Eph 5:25-26.

When Christ activated this sixth spring of the waters of life, we were blessed with the washing of the water of the word so that we can receive the faith of the Son. This is the faith to fulfil, by the Spirit, the will of the Father, which is our sanctification.

Christ's seventh wound occurred after His death, when the soldier pierced His side with a spear. The water that flowed from Christ's heart symbolised our access to the New Covenant of the Spirit. Jesus spoke about this river of water flowing from His side when He said, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water".' Joh 7:37-38. The apostle John explained these words of Jesus in the very next verse, writing, 'But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.' Joh 7:39. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us, by Eternal Spirit, so that we can travail with Christ in prayer and remain connected to the fellowship of His offering and sufferings.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock

In the final chapter of the book of Revelation, Christ showed the apostle John 'a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb'. Rev 22:1. The Lord then spoke, saying, 'Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.' Rev 22:7. We recall, earlier in the book of Revelation, the Lord's promise to the church in Laodicea. He said, 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.' Rev 3:21. The presbytery in Laodicea was defunct, evidenced by the fact that Christ had no access to the church there. He was standing outside and knocking on the door. While Christ does knock on the 'door' of whole presbyteries, Christ also comes and knocks on the 'door' of every family. To those families who open and receive Him, Christ comes in to dine and to speak with them.

We were encouraged, a fortnight ago, that any complacency or ambivalence concerning Christ's second coming must be replaced by the faith of the Son to join the fellowship of His overcoming. At this time, Christ is imploring us to see, by illumination, that He is knocking on the door of our hearts and our homes with a compelling message: He is speaking to us about being ready for His coming. As we persevere in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, we are coming forth with Him by water and by blood. He has inaugurated a new and living way for us and is now commanding us to draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean [by the blood of the Lamb] from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Heb 10:22. The 'body' that the apostle Paul referred to is our 'body' of offering. As the elements of water and blood continue to be ministered to us from each of Christ's wounding events, we can present our bodies a living [i.e. made alive by the blood] and holy [i.e. made clean by the water] sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is our spiritual service of worship. Rom 12:1.

Times of refreshing

In the book of Acts, we read about the apostle Peter's sermon in Solomon's portico. He declared, 'The things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Therefore, repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, *in order that times of refreshing may come* from the presence of the Lord.' Act 3:19-20. The Lord is speaking to us today as our great Shepherd. And He is calling us to follow Him in His offering journey. He turns each suffering event that we experience into a spring of the water of life. As we receive the ministry of water and blood today, He is refreshing us in our walk with Him, with our families and with our brethren.