

# Better Future

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# Better Future

**A Guide to Eternity**

**Book I // Issue III // March 2018**

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# EDITORIAL

*Sohil Prasad*

While pondering on what line to use to greet the readers for the March edition, my mind was drawn to the Pauline style. Except for 1st and 2nd Timothy, where Paul uses grace, mercy and peace in his greeting, he confines himself to grace and peace in his other epistles.

Grace and peace are what I pray for all our readers. If one were to just pause and allow the gravity of these seemingly simple looking words to sink in, we would realise how wretched we are without them. They are probably the most precious treasures a child of God can possess. So many of us are frustrated beyond repair caught in the web of self effort and carrying the guilt of failure. Many a pulpit has become performance based lacking the wonder working grace and abiding peace.

It is for such that our Master has offered a rest where man has ceased from his efforts. When the revelation of grace enters man's heart, peace follows. Grace as well as peace seem to appear inseparable. Where there is grace, there is peace. May we all drink from the rivers of His grace and His peace which passes all understanding and may they flow from our hearts to the thirsty world.

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# HEART TO HEART

## NOT A VICTIM BUT A VICTOR

*Joy M. Thomas*

A victim is someone who has been hurt and is suffering because of the actions of someone or something else. A child of God is not called to remain a victim. God leads His children in triumph after triumph. His children are called to be victors. A victor is a person who defeats the enemy, Satan. It's true that the devil wants to harm us; but he can never succeed as long as we resist him, standing firm in our faith with God.

Many people are living with a victim mentality. They are focused on the negative(s) that has happened to them. Unknowingly, they're developing an attitude

of complaining and murmuring. They don't realize that they're dragging the pains of their past into their present. Are you one among them?

No matter what you have been through, you have to shake yourself out of this victim mentality and realize God's plan for you. He has called you to be a victor, so put your foot down and make a decision that you'll no longer live a prisoner to your past. God wants to turn all that around in your favour.

I invite your total attention to the Bible passage given below: "Three days later, when David and his men arrived home at

their town of Ziklag, they found that the Amalekites had made a raid into the Negev and Ziklag; they had crushed Ziklag and burned it to the ground. They had carried off the women and children and everyone else but without killing anyone. When David and his men saw the ruins and realized what had happened to their families, they wept until they could weep no more. David's two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal from Carmel, were among those captured. David was now in great danger because all his men were very bitter about losing their sons and daughters, and they began to talk of stoning him. But David found strength in the Lord his God. (1 Samuel 30:1-6 NLT)

What a wonderful attribute! David was in a helpless situation - his two wives, his men's wives and children had been taken captive by the Amalekites. When David found himself in such great distress, what was his mentality? Did he put forth a victim mentality? It's true that David wept until he was exhausted, but that was just for a very short period of time. He refused to sit down in the ashes of defeat. He shook off all those

disappointments; he recognized God's call and anointing upon himself. He looked up to God, his Commander-in-Chief and found strength in Him. He turned his ears to hear His voice for guidance. He asked God, "Should I chase after this band of raiders? Will I catch them?" And the Lord told him, "Yes, go after them. You will recover everything that was taken from you."

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**"No matter what you have been through, you have to shake yourself out of this victim mentality and realize God's plan for you."**

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What an excellent example! This is what you need to do. Go seek God for His guidance. Do exactly as He instructs you and you will certainly see His glory when things begin to work out in your favour. When you go through some sort of loss or disappointment, God doesn't expect you to be emotionless. You are allowed to grieve for a certain period of time, but don't allow yourself to live there. Humble yourself

before God and look up to Him. David testifies, "Those who look to Him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened; He saved me from all my troubles" (Psalm 34:5,6 NLT).

Standing on God's promise, David stood up as a brave soldier and encouraged his men to chase the Amalekites. With the help of God, they defeated them and recovered all that had been stolen by the Amalekites. It's written, "David brought everything back" (1 Samuel 30:19). An awesome victory! David proved himself to be a leader chosen by God. His men were excited and their trust in him grew to a higher level. David became a victor!

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**"Go seek God for His guidance. Do exactly as He instructs you and you will certainly see His glory when things begin to work out in your favour."**

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Are you sitting in some ashes today? Come on, it's time to rise up from there. Today can be a turning point. God wants to take your negative experiences and use them to your advantage. Seek God, His Kingdom and His righteousness. Submit yourself totally to Him. Keep a smile on your face and hold your head high, believing God will bring joy that will drown away your mourning. Be a victor in Christ!

*"You are not a victim. No matter what you have been through, you're still here. You may have been challenged, hurt, betrayed, beaten, and discouraged, but nothing has defeated you. You are still here! You have been delayed but not denied. You are not a victim, you are a victor. You have a history of victory."*

*- Steve Maraboli*





## DEVOTION

### Big Escape or Great Sacrifice?

*Saju Mathew*

Reading: Mark 15:16-47

“And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard His cry and saw how He died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!” (Mark 15:39)

**N**o one can deny death when it comes to his/her doorstep. Jesus was the only person who lived in this world who could say “No” to death; yet He chose to die on a cross. It was His choice, but why?

The Jewish authorities wanted to crucify Jesus for proclaiming Himself to be the only Savior of all who ever lived, is living now and, will live on the face of planet earth. He claimed that no one -

including their Father Abraham, Moses who gave them the Law and, David who made a kingdom for them- could enter into God’s presence except through Him! It was more than they could bear. They somehow wanted to disprove his claims to be the Savior. They sought to kill Him. They not only wanted to eliminate Jesus by crucifying Him, but also to take away the “image of Jesus” as the Savior of the world from the minds of people. All the mockery they meted out to the suffering Jesus was to disprove His claims. The soldiers put a “purple cloth” upon Jesus as if it were a royal robe and placed a crown of thorns upon His head as if it were a royal crown and

mocked Him by kneeling before Him in irony as if they were paying homage to Him! They struck Him on His head and spat upon His face... They mocked Him as Prophet (v.29), as Savior (v.31), and as King (v.32). They made themselves believe that Jesus was not a king.

Looking at Jesus hanging on a cross, the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked Him. "Save Yourself," they challenged, "to prove that You are able to save others..." It is interesting to note that the Jewish religious leaders so hated Jesus that they even went out to Golgotha to mock Him! The High priest's intentions seem to have been fulfilled if we look at it from a human perspective. Everyone present at Calvary disdained Jesus. Passers-by derided, the soldiers mocked; even the thieves reviled Him. Our Lord's patience is simply wonderful! He didn't utter a word!

The chief priests asked for a miracle so they could believe in Jesus. It was quite a simple test... "Prove Yourself, man... You say that You are the Savior of the world, the Messiah who came to save all mankind... Poor guy, now hanging on a cross, facing sure death! Hey, Man... Forget about saving the whole world... First save Yourself... Perform your mighty saving power in Your own life...

Come out of the cross by Your "magical" power!"

"Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe" (v.31, 32).

Why didn't Jesus perform a miracle on the cross to make them believe? All those who believed in Him- including John the disciple and the women who followed Jesus even to the cross- surely might have expected Him to take up the challenge of the chief priests and come out of the cross. However, Jesus was silent. He was calm and cool towards the mockery of the chief priests and others... Why? Was it due to His lack of ability? Couldn't He miraculously escape from the cross? God forbid! He was God, even on a cross... He could have, if He wished! However, He knew the disastrous result a "big escape" could pose!

"Only by saving yourself can you save others" is the philosophy of the world and of worldly religions. The truth is just the opposite. If you want to save others, you need to take up their punishment. If you need to give life to others, you need to endure death yourself.

Had Jesus come down from the cross, at the challenge of the chief priests, He could certainly have saved Himself, but never any

other. Satan knew that and, that was “the last temptation” by the tempter!

Jesus didn’t avoid the cross, He endured it. He took all of mankind’s punishment caused by their sin. The biggest challenge He faced on the cross was not the physical pain He suffered, but His “separation from the heavenly Father. “And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “E’lo-i, E’lo-i, la’ma sabach-tha’ni?” which means, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (v.34). It was necessary for Jesus to suffer even this separation from His Father, because that’s what sin did to mankind... it alienated man from God. To rebuild that relationship, Jesus had to be isolated from His Father for some time!

In great pain, Jesus cried aloud and died (v.37). In human eyes, the death of Jesus was a tragedy. However, when the centurion who stood there in front of Jesus heard His cry and saw how He died, He said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”(v.39)

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“Only by saving yourself can you save others” is the philosophy of the world and of worldly religions. The truth is just the opposite. If you want to save others, you need to take up their punishment. If you need to give life to others, you need to endure death yourself.”

It is quite unusual that a Roman centurion, who believed power is god, acknowledged a Jew to be the Son of God: especially when he was seeing Him dying on a cross as a destitute! The chief priests needed a “big escape” to believe in Jesus. But the centurion believed in Him, seeing His death as a “great sacrifice!” Many a time we tend to think a miracle will make people believe. However, it is not a miracle but a sacrifice that makes genuine people believe!

Jesus found glory not in escape, but in sacrifice. How about you and me? Remember, without sacrifice there is no salvation!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I understand it is not a big escape but a great sacrifice that made Jesus my Savior. Help me to see more greatness in sacrifice than in a miracle. Amen

Further Reading: Matthew. 27. 27-34, Luke. 23: 23-47





The background of the page is a soft-focus image of pink roses and several glowing, translucent hearts in shades of pink and white, creating a romantic and gentle atmosphere.

## EVE AND HER GUILT

*Elsie Joy*

The word 'sin' derived from the Greek 'hamartia' means "missing the mark". When God created Adam and Eve, He had a clear picture of their destiny- what they ought to be. To experience its outworking and become what He intended them to be, God gave them commandments. These were clear guidelines and descriptions of their responsibilities. God gave them a definite goal for their life. They had to hit this mark.

God's commandments reveal what He wants us to do. We can thus say that these commandments are the revelation of His perfect will. There are two kinds of commandments: things we are to do and not to do! They are called commandments for execution and commandments of abstention. To be obedient to Him, we must observe both these commandments carefully. This is the right way of living to reach our goal.

When God blessed Adam and Eve, He also empowered them to do His  
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will. He blessed them to be fruitful and multiply. He blessed them to fill the earth with children and to bring the earth under their governance. God blessed them to reign over all creatures on earth (Genesis 1:28).

How blessed were Adam and Eve! God supplied everything in abundance for them. God gave them the right over every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees as their food. God provided companionship to Adam when He created Eve from his rib. God made them for each other. Further, they were given a wonderful garden to enjoy the beauty of nature and the company of other living creatures. And above all, God blessed them with the most exciting experience, His awesome presence.

Have you ever deeply thought of His wonderful provisions that you enjoy in your life today? Are you really grateful to Him? If you were to count His blessings one by one

you would certainly know how great God's love is and how much you should be grateful to Him.

Eden was just a model. God wanted Adam and Eve to gradually turn the whole earth into the excellence of Eden. This is why He blessed them and said, "Fill the earth and subdue it." However, in order to accomplish that, they had to defeat Satan. When Satan tempted Eve, it was her opportunity to defeat him. Her weapons were faith in God and His goodness, and obedience to His commandment to abstain from eating of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But what a horrible tragedy it turned out to be! She lost her opportunity to defeat Satan and missed the mark.

Do you understand what I am speaking about? If Eve was strong enough to stick to God's command, history would have been different! Defeated Satan would have fled from man and gone to his inheritance— eternal hell; Man would have remained innocent; and, God's plan and purpose would have been fulfilled.

We must have a clear understanding of sin. The disobedience of man caused him to "miss the mark". That is sin! Sin is not stealing, murder or adultery. Those shameful, harmful deeds and other equivalent things are merely the fruit or outcome of sin. Sin is horrible and the payment it deserves is dreadful- separation from God and condemnation to eternal hell.

It was only when Eve experienced the consequences of sin that she realized its horrible nature. Until then, Adam and Eve were aware of only that which was good. They had never tasted the bitterness of evil. But the moment they broke God's command, they understood its ugliness. They felt a sense of shame as they realized their nakedness, the outcome of falling short of God's glorious standard. They became slaves of sin and death, and unworthy to stand before God.

The sin of Adam and Eve was not limited to the two of them. As entire humanity was created in Adam, all of us were also in him when he sinned. But our great and loving God lavished His immeasurable love on us. He gave us Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son as a sacrifice of atonement.

Today, He offers us the golden opportunity and privilege to be born again and experience eternal life. He calls us to receive His wonderful grace revealed in Christ and accept Jesus as Lord of our life.

We must now incline ourselves to wholeheartedly obey God's commands and do His will. Satan never repents. He is just as cunning and deceiving with us as he was with Eve. Paul sighs: "But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent" (2 Corinthians 11:3). Let us be alert!



## VALLEY OF WEeping

*JP Palathingal*

“Happy are those who are strong in the LORD, who set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. When they walk through the Valley of Weeping, it will become a place of refreshing springs where pools of blessing collect after the rains! They continue to grow stronger, and each of them will appear before God in Zion” (Ps. 84:5-7).

**T**he pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem passed through the barren valleys. Many of them were ‘weeping valleys’. The weeping may have been a symbolic reference to the times of struggles and tears through which people must pass on the

way to meet their destiny - God. Growing strong in God’s presence is often preceded by a journey through barren places in our lives. The person who spends time with God everyday of his/her life will see his/her adversities as an opportunity to re-experience God’s presence and faithfulness.

At present if you are walking through your ‘Valley of Weeping’, be sure and encouraged that your pilgrimage here on earth leads toward God and His dwelling place, not away. Your challenges in life will help you to draw closer to God and His word.

Paul says the same thing in



other words with his vast experience: - “Since I know it is all for Christ’s good, I am quite content with my weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong” because “And I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, that everything that happened to me here (on earth) has helped to spread the Good News (more)” (2 Cori.12:10, Phil.1:12).

In 1991, we were serving the Lord in Shahabad, Kurukshetra District of Haryana along with our two daughters. The organization for which we were working at that time stopped our financial support due to some misunderstanding. For three days, we didn’t have anything to eat except some ‘radish’ (mooli). This too was provided by the village people. Thanks to the milkman, we were able to give milk mixed with water to our daughters. On the evening of the third day, we got food from one of our friends who was a Government employee and Hindu brother, as he was celebrating his daughter’s birthday. When he came to know that we had not eaten for three days, he was astonished and sad. He informed his friends and

relatives, and this provided an opportunity for us to share the Gospel with them. Praise God, on account of those three days of eating nothing but ‘radish’, we got four families for His kingdom. Yes, I also want to say like Paul, dear brothers and sisters, that whatever happened negatively in our lives during the last 27 years has served to spread the Good News in that area! See every challenge or adversity in your life as an opportunity to become a pool of blessing. In that way, you can make every “valley of weeping into a refreshing spring” so that His name will be glorified through your life in every situation.

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“At present if you are walking through your ‘Valley of Weeping’, be sure and encouraged that your pilgrimage here on earth leads toward God and His dwelling place, not away.”

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## HE WILL MAKE A WAY

*Francis Frangipane*

**T**axes, threat of terror attacks, illness and aging, finances, political conflicts, family relationships, church struggles, fears, insurance issues, air travel impositions, job loss, gasoline prices, war, injustice, death - these are just a few of the enemies most of us face daily. Yet, let me also tell you what the Lord has spoken to my soul:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

The Lord doesn't want us to sim-

ply possess a generalized peace, based on having no particular problems; nor does He plan to give us a slightly spiritual, yet human-sized kind of peace. If we follow the sequence of obedience He presents, His intention is to shelter us in His very own peace: the imperturbable peace of God. The peace of God is the deep calm that envelops the thought processes of the Almighty. He is never anxious, always in command, never without a remedy. He sees the end from the beginning and views the needs of man from the position of unlimited resources and capabilities. He perceives the needs of His children with both compassion and confidence, for all things are

possible for Him.

The peace He gives is not only from Him, it is an extension of Him – it is the very substance of His peace. It is God-sized peace. It is this divine fabric that He says will “guard [our] hearts and . . . minds in Christ Jesus.”  
Amazing.

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*“The peace of God is the deep calm that envelops the thought processes of the Almighty. He is never anxious, always in command, never without a remedy.”*

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### **Many Verses Same Promise**

Some may challenge my interpretation, but remember the Savior’s promise:

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful” (John 14:27).

Again, Paul says,

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful” (Col 3:15).

These Scriptures and others reveal that there exists a place of refuge for us, a dimension guarded by God’s very peace, where we can abide. As we enter this realm of trust, the God of peace promises to actually crush Satan beneath our feet (Rom. 16:20).

### **Give Peace A Chance**

Of course, we must decide what realm shall preside over us. Thus, the Scripture says, “Let the peace of Christ rule,” and “Do not let your heart be troubled,” and “let your requests be known to God.” The word ‘let’ speaks of choices we can make with realities that are at hand. Remember, even as circumstances begin to trouble your heart, you can retreat from fear. For the peace of God is also accessible. Take authority over your fretting, worrying attitude, for “it leads only to evil-doing” (Ps. 37:8). Stand, instead, in faith upon the promises of God.

Peace is our shield and the Word of God our weapon. Therefore, capture negative, unbelieving thoughts that would magnify problems rather than magnify the Lord. Our Father knows what we have need of before we ask Him (Matt. 6:8).

Cease striving and know that He is God! If you are weary, come to Him and take His yoke upon you. You will find rest for your soul. Finally, recall Paul’s words to make our requests “with thanksgiving.” Many have been thinking too much and thanking too little. Therefore, let us cast our burdens upon the Lord, for He indeed cares for us. He will make a way.





## YOUTH SPEAK TO YOUTH

### DEMONETIZATION – A Reminder

*Vivian Varghese*

Not so long ago “Incredible India” arose to a clarion call by our ever so mesmerising honourable Prime Minister on the eve of Nov 8, 2016. This was deemed to be “nation at war” against the menace of black money. “DeMo” became a household discussion topic with everyone offering a doctoral thesis. The world stood astonished and watched this brave step where 85% of currency in circulation became defunct. The idea was that of a surgical strike on unaccounted money supposedly stashed away out of the reach of Taxmen. In our country where 1% Indians own 58% of wealth and 10% own 80% of wealth, the balance 90% of our countrymen felt vindicated. The euphoria wasn’t on the expectation of some incoming benefits but rather an anticipation that the rich would

suffer alongside the commoner who was anyway suffering. The whole country awaited with dramatic anticipation the unearthing of the betrayers of our motherland. Well, two months shy of announcement anniversary, RBI reported that 99% of defunct currency had made its way back into the system with gains of the move yet to be quantified. However, since I realise you are not reading this article for appearing in MA Economics final, I would like to narrow our attention to some vital issues we observed through all this melodrama. Just wondering: When did money have colour? How did it gain the ability to change colour? How is it white? And when does it turn black? Why black? Not blue? Not green? Is wealth a problem or possessing it a problem?

I would argue that this is symptomatic of a deeper trouble. We may demonetize currency in a move to arrest its illegitimate hoarding, but I wonder whether a piece of paper has its own will? One of my classmates in XII standard once stated in an extempore “If you think money can do anything for you, you will do anything for money”. I suggest that the problem isn’t in the quantity or value of the tender, it is rather in the intent of the bearer. The issue therefore isn’t blackness of currency rather it is the darkness of our heart.

Let’s run some diagnostics here. Read Jeremiah 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Matthew 6:21 - For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Genesis 6:5 - The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. Jesus said “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” Luke 12:15. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” - Mark 10:24-25

This depravity of our hearts is

all-pervasive and is not just limited to money matters. It is not rooted in ignorance or negligence. Rather it is based on conscious choices we make. Come to think of it, If God the Son had to empty Himself to make a way out of this woe, how serious the situation must have been! Ponder, how could ‘infinity’ become ‘nothing’? A mathematical improbability, philosophical incongruity, logical absurdity yet a historical reality and thankfully a saving grace!

Any idea how God demonetized our hearts?? For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. - John 3:16. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. - 2 Corinthians 5:21. In His amazing grace, instead of making us defunct for our wretchedness, God has atoned us into becoming His righteousness, ‘in Christ’! For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord – Romans 6:23. Remember! For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a Lamb without blemish or defect. - 1 Peter 1:17-19. Question: have we really demonetized the darkness of our heart at the counter of grace?

# BIBLE STUDY



## BLESSED IN CHRIST

*Rincy Cherian*

Ephesians 1:3

Praise be to our God and Father who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

**T**hrough Christ Jesus, we have been blessed by God the Father with every spiritual blessing. Spiritual blessings are different from and superior to material or earthly blessings. While God as our Heavenly Father certainly meets our daily needs (Mt 6:11, 33; 1 Tim. 6:17; Phil. 4:19), the blessings we have received in Christ are of far greater worth and value!

Jesus described the essential features of a spiritually blessed per-

son in terms of “godly character” (Mt. 5:3-12). When He looked at people and identified them as blessed or cursed, it was based on their “receptivity and response to His teachings and mighty works” (Mt. 8:10; 11:20-24; 23:13). His parables and letters focused on being “rich toward God” and “having treasures in Heaven” (Lk. 12:20-21; 12:33; Rev. 3:17-18). And the apostles of Jesus also emphasized the aspect of godliness, telling everyone that God sent Jesus to “bless people” by enabling them to “turn away from their wicked ways” (Acts 3:26).

We must recognize that even if we experienced every external comfort and pleasure, we would

still be empty and miserable without the Lord's work of inner or spiritual transformation. Two biblical characters would help us grasp this truth. One is the patriarch Jacob who was blessed beyond measure from an earthly perspective but was desperate for the real or authentic blessing- an inner life change or character transformation (Gen. 32:26). The other person was Solomon who enjoyed all kinds of pleasures but whose observation after having tasted them all was "Meaningless! Everything is meaningless!" (Eccl. 1:2; 2:1-11).

Going deeper into our study, let us now briefly examine the blessings we have been given freely and generously in Christ. The new covenant established through Christ is based on better promises and grants unique, unparalleled advantages compared to what people of God experienced under the old covenant (Heb. 8:6-13; 1 Pet. 1:10-12). What are some of those glorious riches and priceless benefits we can now appropriate and enjoy through our union with Christ?

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**"Spiritual blessings are different from and superior to material or earthly blessings."**

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## **1. BLESSED WITH THE ACCESS** (Mt. 27:51; Eph. 2:13; Heb. 10:19, 22)

Through sin, man's relationship with God got severed. But through the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross and His blood shed for our sins, we have been reconciled with Him (2 Cor. 5:18). We who once were far away from God have now been brought near to Him (1 Pet. 3:18). We who once were guilty are now forgiven (Eph. 1:7). We who once were unrighteous are now declared righteous (Rom. 3:22). We who once were identified as sinners are now called as saints (Rom. 1:17). We who once were enemies of God are now His beloved children (1 Jn. 3:1) and close friends (Jn. 15:15).

Now, we can relate to the Lord and experience Him in the most glorious way! We can literally live in His presence and enjoy deep intimacy with Him. We can rejoice in His love, behold His beauty and sing of His goodness. We can hear His voice, feel His heart, discern His will and know His ways. We can experience the fulfillment of His dream and purpose for our lives.

## **2. BLESSED WITH THE ANOINTING** (Lk. 11:12; 24:49; Acts 1:4-5)

John the Baptist revealed the full



scope of Jesus' life and ministry. He proclaimed Him as "the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29, 36) and the One who would "baptize people in the Holy Spirit" (Mk. 1:8; Jn. 1:33). Jesus came as Saviour and Baptizer!

The Holy Spirit has been given for primarily two purposes: Purity and Power (1 Thess. 4:1-8; Acts 1:8). One is regarding emancipation from sin, the other is concerning effectiveness as a witness. The Spirit of God helps us to lead holy lives by working within us to desire and to act according to God's good purpose (Rom. 8:5; Phil. 2:12-13). And He energizes our inner man filling us with His gifts, giving us supernatural experiences and causing us to minister rivers of living water to everyone around us (Jn. 7:38; Acts 2:17-18; 1 Cor. 14).

### **3. BLESSED WITH THE ASSEMBLY** (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:4)

No believer is an orphan. He has God as His Father, Jesus as His elder brother, and the church as his family. We are now members of God's household and Christ's very body. The assembly of believers from Jewish and Gentile background is truly a tremendous gift from God. For the apostle

Paul, believers were his joy and he was always exceedingly grateful to God for them (Phil. 1:4; 4:1; 1 Thess. 1:2).

Our union with the body of believers enables us to practically experience the love of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:17-19; 5:18-19; 1 Pet. 4:10; 1 Jn. 3:16-18). We grow in our understanding of the Lord, are established in His ways and attain the stature of Christ through the equipping ministries (Eph. 4:11-13). We are encouraged and strengthened in the faith by being part of an assembly of believers (Heb. 3:14; 10:24-25).

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*"We must recognize that even if we experienced every external comfort and pleasure, we would still be empty and miserable without the Lord's work of inner or spiritual transformation."*

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### **4. BLESSED WITH THE APPOINTMENT** (Mt. 5:13-14; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20)

People often take pride in being chosen for a task or assigned a project by a reputed company or distinguished individual. Well, there are several unmatched job descriptions that are unique to us

as people of God. To highlight a few, we are called and appointed to be the “salt of the earth”, the “light of the world”, and “ambassadors of Christ”.

We are the representatives of Heaven on earth. We are the agents of transformation and channels of blessing. We stand and speak for God. We communicate the message of Christ and demonstrate the works of Christ.

## 5. BLESSED WITH THE ASSURANCE (Jn. 14:2; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21)

As disciples of Jesus, we can live with full-fledged assurance through the hope we have in Christ. Unlike others who do not know God, we have no need to be anxious of the future or afraid of death. We can live confident in the faithfulness of God to lead us each day of our lives here on earth, and courageous in the face of death knowing that we will be with Christ when we leave this physical body.

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*“We can literally live in His presence and enjoy deep intimacy with Him. We can rejoice in His love, behold His beauty and sing of His goodness”*

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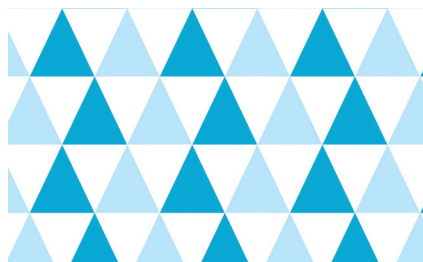
Furthermore, we have the wonderful promise of the sure and soon return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20; Tit. 2:13) and we can look forward to inheriting a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness (2 Peter 3:13). There we will be free from sin, evil, tears, pain, poverty, suffering, curse, death, and we will enter into the fullest experience of rest, refreshing, rejoicing, rewards, revelations and righteousness (Rev. 21:4-5).

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**“The Bible is one of the greatest blessings bestowed by God on the children of men. It has God for its author; salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture for its matter. It is all pure.”**

**- John Locke**

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**LIFE on earth is temporary;  
yet man spends his TOTAL  
energy, talents, resources,  
and time on it. Life after  
death is ETERNAL, whether  
in Heaven or Hell. WHY is no  
one concerned about  
ensuring Heaven and not  
investing their life to get  
eternal rewards?**

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