

# The Pilgrimage To A Spirit-Led Life

## Part Nineteen

We ended the last time discussing our need to have a close relationship with God if we are to live a life that is led by the Holy Spirit.

At no time will God ever force us to go His way.

**John 1:29-32 [NIV]** *“The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptising with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” Then John gave this testimony: “**I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.**”*

The Holy Spirit is likened to a dove; a very timid creature which will fly away at any slight disturbance, but is also symbolic of hope and peace.

The only one who never scared the dove away was Jesus because he had a lamb-like nature.

If we are to have this close relationship with the Holy Spirit (God) we have to have the lamb-like nature, meekness, purity, and a life laid down in sacrifice.

**Romans 8:14 [NIV]** *“because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”*

We are **not** slaves any longer but sons, **not** motivated by fear, but by love.

Although God has made total provision for us to become His Sons and credited His Righteousness to us, we have to “*work out*” this righteousness by putting to death these deeds of the flesh.

**John 1:12 [NIV]** *“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, **he gave the right to become children of God,**”*

Right to become the Sons of God.

“*Right*” Greek “*exousia*” – capacity – competency – ability – strength – authority.

But we have to willingly use this right.

When we are born again, what we get is authority, we don’t become anything without using this authority that we have been given.

**The new birth is just a potential;** opportunity to develop into something wonderful if we exercise authority in a scriptural way over the weaknesses and problems we have.

We will not mature as Christians unless we do take the path of resisting our fleshly nature, led by the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 8:15 [NIV]** *“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, **but you received the Spirit of adoption** by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”*

“*Spirit*” Greek “*pneuma*” mental disposition – principles – mind.

“Adoption” Greek “*huiiothesia*” the placing as a son – signifies the place and condition of a son given to one to whom it does **not** naturally belong.

Paul uses a powerful metaphor to describe the relationship of Christian to God.

It is only when we understand how serious and complicated a step of Roman adoption was that we can really understand the depth of meaning in this passage.

A Roman father’s power over his family was absolute, and a Roman son never came of age; he was, whatever his age, still under his father’s authority.

Adoption – a person had to pass from the authority [power] of one father into the authority [power] of another.

Transfer involved two steps:

a) The father carried out a symbolic sale of his son. Three times this symbolic sale was made, twice the father brought back his son, but **not** the third time. Thus the authority of father was broken and transfer could legally proceed.

b) The adopting father then presented a legal case for the transfer to a judge. When this was completed, the adoption was complete.

The consequences of this adoption are very significant in the picture Paul is presenting in this statement.

- 1) The adopted person lost **all** rights in his old family and gained **all** rights in his new.
- 2) He became co-heir with any naturally born sons in his new family.
- 3) In law, all debts incurred in his old family by the person adopted were wiped out as if they never existed.
- 4) In the eyes of the law the adopted son was literally and absolutely the son of his new father.

**What wonder duality is seen in the vivid metaphor of our relationship with God.**

**Romans 8:16** [NIV] *“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”*

The Holy Spirit [God] himself along with our spirit both are witnesses to our being adopted into the created family of God.

**If God states that we are His Son or Daughter, we don’t have to be concerned with what other people may say.**

Our only concern is that our own spirit may also increasingly day by day also bear witness to that fact.

**Romans 8:17** [New King James] *“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.**”*

“*Joint-heirs*” we all share the total inheritance with Christ, **not** just some small portion of it.

But note there is a condition: “*IF*” we suffer with him.

Our inheritance depends on our willingness to suffer with him.

If we reject the suffering that the life of a Christian brings in its wake, I feel we have **no** claim on this inheritance.

There is a certain tendency in the Christian church today to dismiss suffering as something that doesn't belong to the Christian life.

Yet the very opposite is mentioned in God's Word countless times. [1 Peter 2:19-21; 1 Peter 5:10; Acts 9:16; Matthew 5:11; 2 Corinthians 1:7; Philippians 3:10; Matthew 10:16-22; 2 Timothy 3:12]

**Romans 8:18** [NIV] *"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."*

Coming from Paul this is rather an impressive statement.

Very few others could catalogue in their own lives the list of suffering Paul had endured for his faith.

**2 Corinthians 11:23-27** [NIV] *"Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been **in prison** more frequently, been **flogged** more severely, and been **exposed to death** again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the **forty lashes** minus one. Three times I was **beaten with rods**, once I was **stoned**, three times I was **shipwrecked**, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in **danger from rivers**, in danger from **bandits**, in danger from **my own countrymen**, in danger from **Gentiles**; in danger **in the city**, in danger **in the country**, in danger **at sea**; and in danger **from false brothers**. I have laboured and toiled and have **often gone without sleep**; I have **known hunger and thirst** and have often gone without food; I have been **cold and naked**."*

In context of comparing himself with some others who were falsely claiming to be servants of Christ.

It is also amazing that Paul in the same letter calls this "*our light affliction*" [2 Corinthians 4:17-18] but when we view it from eternity, the viewpoint from which God judges everything.

What then can we complain about!!

**What can make the difference to any suffering we go through is the vision we have of the future "glory" in our "mind's eye".**

If we lose this vision we will not benefit from our suffering; although we will still suffer.

**Romans 8:19** [NIV] *"The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed."*

Paul is still on the subject of suffering, but seeks to broaden our concept of this suffering to **all** of God's Creation.

The whole creation is suffering because of our sin, for it was sin which plunged creation into chaos and futility.

Creation will **not** be redeemed until we are redeemed.

**The whole creation is waiting for us!!**

**Psalms 96:11-13** [NIV] *"Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth."*

**All nature is anticipating the return of Christ, except the major part of the Christian church which is asleep.**

Nature is awake and ready to rejoice at Christ's return.

## **Are we out of harmony with God and His Creation?**

**Psalms 98:7-8** [NIV] *“Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;”*

Waiting for Christ to come and put things right once again, as they were when first created.

**God placed man as steward of His Earth, but man has raped the Earth, and left it in many places stripped bare and exploited.**

The Earth is crying out to God, *‘How long are you going to allow man to defile me like this, with his misuse and pollution?’*

**The trouble with most of us is that we are so self-centred.**

Someone said that the average prayer was *“God bless me, my wife, our son John and his wife, us four – no more, Amen”*

Paul is seeking to draw us into a situation where we emphasise with the whole of creation.

**Romans 8:20-21** [NIV] *“For the **creation was subjected to frustration**, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”*

*“Frustration”* [emptiness] **not** of its own will.

**Genesis 3:17-19** [NIV] *“To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ **“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”**”*

God’s Pronouncement of Judgement for the sin of man. *“Cursed is the ground because of you”.*

Because Adam [followed by the rest of mankind] failed in his responsibility towards his Creator God, so all that he was responsible for has suffered with him. [**Genesis 2:15-17**]

**We are all responsible to God for certain things whether we know it or acknowledge it.**

This principle of responsibility is one we run away from today.

Parents are responsible for their children.

If parents fail, children suffer.

The children don’t deserve it but it comes as a result of the failure of the stewards that God has given responsibility to for the new lives He has created.

**Parenting is a stewardship for which we will have to give account to God as to how well we performed as parents.**

We are Stewards of God as far as our bodies and our minds are concerned.

Both were given by our Creator for a limited period of time before we have to give account to Him as to how we used them!!

**Genesis 3:18** [NIV] *“It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.”*

Thorns and thistles, the visible mark of the Earth being under a curse.

Who provided redemption from the curse? Jesus.

To whom was given a crown of thorns and a purple robe [the colour of the thistle]?

**Romans 8:21-23** [NIV] *“that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that **the whole creation has been groaning** as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, **but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.**”*

Is this true of you?

I ask the same question of myself.

Do I groan within my self because of what man has done to God’s Creation?

Both. Physical [the Earth] and Spiritual Creation [our minds].

Both are being polluted by society today.

It does say [v22] *“the whole creation”*.

I feel God hates what is being done to His Physical Creation, but even more for how His Spiritual Creation is being polluted by a wrong spirit and a **wrong education**.

**Ezekiel 9:4** [New King James] *“and the LORD said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and **put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.**”*

God sets aside as a special group of people those who *“sigh and cry”* for all the abominations [what is detestable to God] that are found in society.

[Abominations:- **Proverbs 6:16-19; Proverbs 11:20; Proverbs 15:8-9, 26; Proverbs 16:5; Proverbs 17:15; Proverbs 20:10; Proverbs 21:27; Proverbs 24:9; Proverbs 28:9; Deuteronomy 18:9-13]**

We have **not** been stewards of God’s Creation.

We have exploited the physical creation for greed as a result of our selfishness.

**People have also exploited God’s Spiritual Creation, His Word, for personal gain.**

People have used the Word of God as a weapon to create fear in the minds of others in order to extract money from them.

**God’s Word is designed to create love, not fear.**

The working of the Holy Spirit through a preacher of God’s Word should create in the listeners, power, love and soundness of thought.

**2 Timothy 1:6-7** [NIV] *“For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. **For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.**”*

*“Power”* Greek *“dunamis”* miraculous power – mighty wonderful work – *“love”* Greek *“agapé”* – God’s Love – again supernatural not natural – only when in communion with God -

“self discipline” Greek “*sophronismos*” a mind that is made [created] – temperate and controlled – never used to describe the natural mind but something which has been created.

**1 Peter 4:1-11** [NIV] *“Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. The end of all things is near. **Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.** Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”*

“same attitude” Christ’s – v7 “clear minded” Greek “*sophronismos*” – the attitude that is described in **2 Timothy 1:7** is the very attitude of God – again supernatural –

**Romans 8:23** [NIV] *“Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”*

We who have God’s Spirit in us should have empathy with God’s Physical Creation which is part of the work of God’s Spirit [**Genesis 1:1**].

We both, the created physical world and our spirit filled mind, wait for redemption at Christ’s return.

At Christ’s return our bodies will be changed [**2 Corinthians 15:51-58; Philippians 3:6-21**] our goal is the resurrection, our completed redemption.

**Matthew 19:28** [NIV] *“Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, **at the renewal of all things**, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”*

“The renewal” not just our personal new birth.

**Matthew 24:8** [NIV] *“All these are the beginning of birth-pains.”*

“Beginning of the birth-pains” – that go before a new birth, new age. [Note “earthquakes” – physical new birth involved – v7]

**Romans 8:26-27** [NIV] *“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”*

**Don’t get wrapped up in our personal problems and inter-denomination contentions but become part of this great vision by joining the physical creation, and guided by the Holy Spirit pray for this great day to soon dawn, for this is God’s Will.**