

The Paradox of Our Christian Life Experience

There is a paradox to the plan God has for humanity.

We first have to know and experience our total separation from a Holy Creator God before we can know and experience the intimate union God desires to have with His created children.

God is Holy and this Holiness makes it impossible for us to approach Him as we are.

Romans 3:23 [NIV] *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”*

We all fall far short of the perfection of God’s character, especially His righteousness.

Romans 3:23 [NIV] *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”*

The Greek word translated “holy” is “hagiōs” signifying separation.

How are we separated from our Creator God?

a) God is spirit

John 4:24 [NIV] *“God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”*

God is spirit, that is not limited to time or space.

Genesis 2:7 [NIV] *“the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”*

We are created out of dust with a touch of spirit but tightly bound to the dust from which we were made and locked into time which is linked to the movement of a created universe.

Genesis 3:19 [NIV] *“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.”*

Without God’s intervention we return to our original state, “dust”.

Job 32:8 [NIV] *“But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding,”* [**Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11**].

It is the spirit in us, who are composed of dust, that gives us intellect.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 [NIV] *“and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.”*

This spirit in us returns to God who gave it at death.

b) God is The Creator

Colossians 1:15-16 [NIV] *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **For by him all things were created:** things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.”*

All things were made by Christ [God] and for God.

Ephesians 2:10 [NIV] *“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

We are the product of God’s workmanship, the created creatures, of His toil.

Isaiah 64:8 [NIV] *“Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.”*

We are as separated from the Holy God as lifeless clay is to the living, creating potter who moulds the clay.

c) God is the origin of all intellect

Isaiah 55:6-9 [NIV] *“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

Our thoughts, our intellect is un-comparable to that of our Creator.

We are commanded by our Creator God to seek His thoughts and abandon our own inferior intellect.

God will then in His great mercy forgive the sins that are the outcome of our inferior intellect.

d) The initiative must always be with God

Psalms 19:13 [King James] *“Keep back thy servant also from **presumptuous sins**; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.”*

To take the initiative away from God is presumptuous, and wilful rebellion against our Creator.

e) Only God Himself can bridge this vast separation between us and the Sovereign God

This is exactly what He has done for us.

John 1:1-3, 14 [NIV] *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” ... “**The Word became flesh** and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ [the anointed One].

Why?

Genesis 1:26-27 [NIV] *“**Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.**”*

God wanted to share His creation and in a limited way His creative power and rulership with created beings of similar nature to Himself.

What prompted God to do this?

1 John 4:8 [NIV] *“Whoever does not love does not know God, **because God is love.**”*

God is love and love demands a being who can be the recipient of that love.

How does God show and prove this love He has for us?

1 John 4:9 [NIV] *“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.”*

The life, death and the resurrection of Jesus the Son of Man and the Son of God is the proof of God’s Love for us.

1 John 4:10 [NIV] *“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”*

The initiative as always was with God.

How will this love of God for us, shown in Jesus the Christ [anointed of God] fulfil the Creator God’s initial plan to create beings similar to His own nature?

1 John 4:11-17 [NIV] *“Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No-one has ever seen God; **but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.** We know that we live in him and he in us, because **he has given us of his Spirit.** And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.”*

Here we are shown the process by which we are changed into the created children of God.

We learn to love God.

How does this come about?

Through the work of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Counsellor** to be with you for ever, **the Spirit of truth.** The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Having sacrificed His life for the whole of humanity on the cross, Christ was resurrected by the Holy Spirit [God] and ascended to His Father’s throne to start His work as our High Priest.

So that His disciples would not be without Him, Christ asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit to be with His disciples through all generations. This happened because the Father always answers His Son’s prayers as Christ only asks for what is the Father’s Will [**Matthew 26:39**].

What is the work of the Holy Spirit sent by the Father at Christ’s request?

John 16:7-8 [NIV] *“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will **convict the world** of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:”*

The first task of Holy Spirit is to convict us of the fact that we are sinners and need a Saviour.

This is the first step to humble us before the Creator God.

1 Peter 5:5-6 [NIV] *“Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” **Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.**”*

Before we can be elevated to the position of a created child of God we have to be humbled before God.

Romans 3:23 [NIV] *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”*

We have all sinned and do **not** deserve to be glorified by God as His created son.

Romans 6:23 [NIV] *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Our lifestyle only earns us death. We have to humble ourselves to accept the sacrifice of Christ [the love gift from the Father], if we are to live eternally.

Acts 20:28 [NIV] *“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, **which he bought with his own blood.**”*

Accepting this blood sacrifice of Jesus the Son of God means we have been purchased by Jesus in the same way a slave is purchased by a master.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 [NIV] *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.”*

The whole of our body, mind and human spirit belong to God.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.**”*

Out of pure gratitude of what God has done for us through Jesus our Saviour we are to show this gratitude by offering ourselves completely to God as a *“living sacrifice”*.

Following the example our Saviour who was also a sacrifice and now lives again by a resurrection.

Romans 6:3-6 [NIV] *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that **our old self was crucified with him** so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin,”*

On acceptance of the blood of Christ and after our symbolic death in the waters of baptism [total immersion] we change our masters.

We become slaves of Christ and love instead of Satan and sin.

Romans 6:13 [NIV] *“Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as **instruments of righteousness.**”*

We are to gradually become in God’s hands *“instruments of righteousness.”*

Romans 6:16, 19 [NIV] *“Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey, whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death,*

*or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?” ... “I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness **leading to holiness.**”*

We become slaves of righteousness that will lead us to become Holy similar to our Creator God who is Holy, and acceptable as His created child.

How is this accomplished?

Romans 12:2 [NIV] *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

By a total change of mind and lifestyle.

1 John 2:15-17 [NIV] *“**Do not love the world or anything in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does, comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives for ever.”*

The world’s society and its way of judging, its thoughts and its actions must be left behind.

1 John 4:13 [NIV] *“We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”*

It is the action of the Holy Spirit in us that generates our love for God.

Galatians 5:16, 22 [NIV] *“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” ... “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,”*

When we live our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit in us and through this intimate relationship some of the fruits of the Holy Spirit will “rub off” on us.

But this is dependent on two factors.

Ephesians 4:30-32 [NIV] *“**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,** with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

The Holy Spirit will only be active in us, if He is not grieved, the things that grieve the Holy Spirit are the listed, starting with bitterness.

Matthew 6:14-15 [NIV] *“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 [NIV] *“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.”*

The solution to this paradox then is life on God’s terms

The process is laid out for us in scripture through Paul in his letter to the Romans.

Romans 8:1-39 [NIV] *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their*

minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation, but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 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. 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. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. 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. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died, more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Allow God through the Holy Spirit to accomplish His desire in our lives that we may then be prepared to dwell in His presence for eternity.

If we are to be made Holy, separated from this world and its ways, we have to give priority to what is Holy!

Matthew 6:31-33 [NIV] *"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*

Seek first in our lives to join the Holy ones [God's Kingdom] and God's character [righteousness] both illustrated for us in the life of our Saviour Jesus Christ.