

YOUR LIFE: Fresh Insights Into God's Pattern For His People.

By John Beaumont

FOREWORD

For many years I have been gently encouraging John Beaumont to write some books which flowed with the teaching he gives to the body of Christ. It gives me great joy to see that these books are now being produced. The topic chosen for the third book in this series is one that is particularly close to my heart.

John and I share with many others in the Church today that we shall become that which satisfies Jesus, who has redeemed us with His own blood. This book helps us to be God-centred in our thinking about what we are doing and about what direction the Church is taking. I believe that a prayerful reading of this book will enable us to move forward to the fulfilment of Paul's prayer and declaration: "Unto Him be the glory in the Church, both now and evermore." Let us encourage one another to so walk with Jesus and so honour Him that His glory is revealed in the Church now and for evermore.

Robert Stockwell

ENGLAND

Cheam, Surrey,

They sang a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
And to open its seals,
Because you were slain,
And with your blood you purchased men for God
from every tribe language and people and nation.
You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
And they will reign on the earth.”

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
To receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
And honour and glory and praise!”

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth
And under the earth and on the sea
And all that was in them singing:

“To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
Be praise and honour and glory and power,
For ever and ever!”

The four living creatures said, “Amen.”
And the elders fell down and worshipped.

1

Your Life: His Glory

Let's walk together. Share with me a pilgrimage into revelation of Father's desires for us. His Church today.

The journey begins with reading in Kenneth Wuest's Expanded Translation of the New Testament, "The partnership of the Holy Spirit be with you all."(1) Partnership with the Holy Spirit? What a precious and yet mind-boggling thought!

The next step is in discovering this, "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."(2)

Partnership with the Spirit . . . keeping in step with the Spirit . . . these two statements captivate my attention repeatedly. Day after day, strong desire wells up within me. I want to walk like that! For Jesus sake I want to be that kind of Christian.

Some things are very obvious if I am to dream of living the quality of God-honouring life that is expressed in these statements. The first is that IT IS POSSIBLE! Yes it is, whether we comprehend it or not. Otherwise these statements would never have been inspired for inclusion in the Book. There MUST be grace available to make them real in my life! And for me, if this is possible then I will reach out for it with my whole being. He deserves that of me!

The second thing that is unquestionable is that if I am to be in partnership with the Holy Spirit then I must recognise that I am very junior in the partnership. I must not expect Him to adjust His ways to my desires or my understanding; I must adjust to gladly fitting in with His purposes! "But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations."(3)

Equally clear is the fact that if I am to keep in step with the Holy Spirit, then I must adjust both my pace and direction accordingly. How frequently saints have wanted the Holy Spirit for the fulfilling of their own visions and plans for the work of God. We have wanted Him to bless our efforts rather than simply making ourselves available and expendable for His purposes and usage.

Because I have set my heart to live in partnership with the Holy Spirit and to keep in step with Him, I need to know enough of His ways to be able to walk in harmony with that portion of the eternal will of God which the Holy Spirit is seeking to accomplish on earth today.

Can you sense the prayer that begins to rise from my heart to the throne of God? Does a similar prayer rise up from within you? I don't need to know all the detail of the great design of God to bring us to the where the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea, and where every knee bows before Him, and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father, my cry becomes, "Father, please show me enough of Your pattern that I may be able to keep in step and in partnership with the Holy Spirit."

After some time I realise that one word is repeated again and again as I reach out to the Lord for understanding and enablement to walk as He desires. The word is "Pattern." I am recognising that I need to know God's pattern for His people today so that every part of my life may be lived in a manner that is compatible with that.

Moving on in this pilgrimage I notice ways in which Pattern" is expressed in scriptures:

"Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you."⁽⁴⁾

"You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model for all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia."⁽⁵⁾ ((Model is the same word--"Pattern."))

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."⁽⁶⁾

When Jesus said, "I have set you an example," ⁽⁷⁾ He was talking—"Pattern."

When Peter was talking to the elders he called them to be examples, (pattern0 to the flock.⁽⁸⁾

The verse that stands out most to me is this:

“They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: ‘See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown to you on the mountain.’”

THE PATTERN OF GOD IS PATTERN MAKING

Notice these statements: I have set you an example . . . Be examples . . . follow my example . . . live according to the pattern we gave you . . . you became imitators . . . you became a model.

In a sense the pattern of God is pattern making. He wants my life to be an example of what He is able to accomplish in a yielded, trusting believer. He wants each local Church to be a pattern, not only for the wider, national church, but for all the earth.

THE PATTERN IS HEAVEN

The pattern given to Moses was a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. Heaven is home, the throne room of God, and as home it reflects His character and person.

We would do well to repeat this frequently-“The pattern is heaven!” Here is a yard-stick to measure the things we see and hear today: Is it compatible with heaven? Does it have the expression, nature, feel, about it that it would fit in there as though it came from there?

There is nothing unclean in heaven. Everything is pure. There is nothing under-handed there, do church politics, behind the scene scheming, nor even a thought or idea that displeases the Lord or is out of character with His own lovely Being.

There is nothing contrary to love in heaven: no innuendo or slander, no critical spirit nor jealous attitude, no party spirit-“I am of Paul; I am of Apollos.”

God is love, and love reigns where God reigns. Holy love is the atmosphere of heaven. Love is the “Family likeness” that should mark out all the redeemed of God on earth regardless of difference of practice and

understanding of God's ways. Nothing less is compatible with God's pattern for His people!

How glorious, how perfect, how delightful, how beautiful and how amazingly wonderful heaven is! That is the pattern! Jesus reigns unrivalled, every eye is toward Him, and His pleasure is paramount in the desires of those "around the throne."

Don't you want your life to be a copy and shadow of that? Don't you long for a place where you worship to be a copy and shadow of heaven? And indeed, doesn't your heart cry out that the whole church everywhere be a copy and shadow of heaven?

Amen! It will be so! In fact it is now in the desire and pattern of God. O for grace to be in partnership and in step with the Holy Spirit for this purpose, this pattern to be established on earth! Lord, your kingdom come! Your will be done as it is in heaven."⁽⁹⁾

2

The Heart of the Pattern

Whether one looks to the tabernacle pattern which Moses received from God on Mount Sinai, or looks instead to John's Revelation for that of which Moses was to build a copy and shadow, one quickly observes the heart of the pattern. At the very heart of all that is shown is the glory of God. The glory of God is the heart of the pattern!

WHAT IS THE GLORY OF GOD? It is the manifestation of His presence. Have you known times when you were almost overwhelmingly aware of the presence of God, when everything else seemed to fade into insignificance as you responded to His touch with your whole being? You experienced something of His glory at that moment.

WHAT IS THE GLORY OF GOD? The glory of God is the visible expression of the invisible attributes of God. It is what becomes discernable when what He is, in essential character and being, is projected into the conscious grasp, vision and understanding of mortal man. David marvelled at the glory of God-His greatness and His gentleness, His holiness and His longsuffering, His righteous anger and His unfailing love, His wisdom, His patience and His mercy, all giving a kaleidoscope of the glory of God.

WHAT IS THE GLORY OF GOD? It is His supernatural capacity, power and willingness to perform, create, establish and transform as only He can. The glory of God is His perfection exercised in active expression of redemptive love. He is a glorious God!

GLORY EMPHASISED

It was only when "The glory of God filled the temple"⁽¹⁰⁾ that the pattern was functional. In a later day when the glory had departed all of the ritual could proceed, but it was without life, meaning or value.

Have you ever noticed how frequently the glory of God is emphasised in the Book of Revelation?

“To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom of priests to serve His God and Father—to Him be GLORY and power for ever and ever! AMEN!”⁽¹¹⁾

“The living creatures give GLORY, honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever. The twenty-four elders fall down and worship Him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say, ‘You are worthy our Lord and our God, to receive GLORY and honour and power . . . ‘⁽¹²⁾

In a loud voice they sang, “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and GLORY and praise!”⁽¹³⁾

“Then I heard every living creature in heaven and on earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and GLORY and power, for ever and ever!”⁽¹⁴⁾

“All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying: ‘Amen! Praise and GLORY and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!.’⁽¹⁵⁾

“The held harps given to them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: ‘Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you O Lord and bring GLORY to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations shall come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.’⁽¹⁶⁾

“After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and GLORY and power belong to our God, for true and just are His judgements.’⁽¹⁷⁾

“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting ‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him GLORY! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready.’⁽¹⁸⁾

It would be so worthwhile to pause at this moment to read over again the above scriptures, preferably aloud, and then to take the time to express your love and praise to Him as best you know how! He will appreciate and enjoy that! And He is certainly worthy of it all!

THE GLORY IS ALL THE LORD'S

How very careful we all must be at this point. He is a jealous God, and will not share His glory with anyone. As a young man I was deeply challenged by a statement in which Ruth Paxson said, "Satan doesn't mind how much God uses a man, if in the end the man robs God of His glory." The faithful Holy Spirit has reminded me of this many times over the years. And I am glad that He has!

One evening three or four young men met together to pray for our city. At one stage one of the brothers asked, "Lord, how are you going to move in this city? We don't want to start anything, nor do we want to lead anything, but we want to align ourselves with your purposes, and to move with your moving."

"Then he asked "Lord, are we to look to you to commence a totally new thing?"

In prophetic reply we heard, "I have tried starting a new thing in this city many a time, says the Lord. But after a while man has put his dirty hands on what I have started to build. I will not share my glory with another, and I have withdrawn my hand of blessing, says the Lord."

This prayer followed, "Then Lord, are we to expect you to revive an old work that has grown cold and brittle? Is that where we should look?"

"That too I have tried, says the Lord, but after a season man put his dirty hand to the fragrant thing I was doing, and I have withdrawn," was the prophetic response.

As one of those present, I joined in the praying: "Father, I know you. Surely it will be with groups of saints worshipping in homes that you will manifest your glory in this city." I had seen a vision of that sometime previously.

How appalling was the prophetically expressed reply, "Even that I have tried a number of times in this city, says the Lord. But before long man has put his dirty hand to what I have been doing, and I have withdrawn."

With tears I cried, "Lord, don't tell me I must wait until heaven to see the things you have spoken to me of within my spirit! God, how will you

work, what will you do, who will you use to establish your reign and manifest your glory in this city?”

You will no doubt notice the amazing reply, “I will take men who have known disappointment and failure, who have experienced loneliness, pain and rejection, and who through all this have learned not to touch my glory. And with such as these will I show forth my love and power, and bring a city to recognise its Lord,” says the One who is holy!

The glory of God is at the heart of the pattern!

We spoke to a gathering of church leaders in Zimbabwe. Towards the end of the sharing the word of the Lord, we asked on His behalf, “Why do you do the good things that you do-the church things, spiritual things, leadership things?” God is less concerned with perfect performance than He is with pure motivation. It is tragically easy to do right things for wrong reasons.

Within moments tears were flowing, repentance was being expressed, and a number were on their faces before God very aware of failure at this crucial point.

The glory of God is at the heart of the pattern!

Unless we understand and give prime place this we will never be able to keep in step with the Holy Spirit and be in partnership with Him. High priority should be given to the coming forth of a “ministry of glory” in our day.

Have you heard the Lord say” If you see my glory you will be my glory”(19) in our day.

“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”(20)

Have you heard the Lord say, “If you see my glory you will be my glory?” If we have an unveiled face and contemplate His glory, the Holy Spirit will transform us into the image of Jesus with ever increasing glory.(21) It is Christ in us who is the hope of glory,(22) And god’s glory is at the heart of God’s pattern for our lives and for the church today.

3

The Prayer of Jesus

As we journeyed to a southern city in New Zealand we listened to the Living Bible cassette. It seemed as though the apostle Paul was sitting in the back seat sharing his heart. We heard this:

“We were made for pouring the riches of His glory into . . . so that everyone can see how very great His glory is.”⁽²³⁾

Isn't that amazing? That is what we were made for-to be containers for the riches of His glory!

Jesus prayed for His followers in the Gospel of John chapter seventeen. He was deeply concerned for their well-being, and also for His Father's glory. In the centre of His prayer is this astounding statement:

“I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me.”⁽²⁴⁾

The heart of the pattern is the glory of God. We were made for pouring His glory into. He has given us the glory that His Father gave Him!

What is the glory we have been given? How is it made so obvious that everyone can see how very great His glory is? We need to know so that the Holy Spirit can establish this in our lives. We want what He wants-that Jesus be glorified in us!

THIS IS THE BEAUTIFUL WAY THAT JESUS EXPRESSED IT IN HIS “JOHN SEVENTEEN” PRAYER.

- 1. JESUS SHARED HIS FATHERS GLORY BECAUSE HE EXPERIENCED HIS FATHER'S LOVE.**⁽²⁵⁾ For Jesus to know that love fully and constantly was glory. He commented, “You have loved them even as you have loved me.” Think on that! We are deeply, wonderfully, gloriously loved. No one has ever been more loved than me . . . than you! This is glory. It is glorious! We are the objects of His grace, His favour and His love! Bless Jesus forever!

How aware are we of Father's love? Do we understand the multitude of ways in which He expresses that love to us every day? Are we appreciative? O how thankful and praise-full we should be! Times without number, the exultation should rise from deep within us: "He loves me. Father loves me! Hallelujah, He loves me."

As we recognise, appreciate and respond to the amazing love of God there will be no place for fear, loneliness, tension or self-pity. How can these find a place in my life when I am loved as much as mortal man ever was? This is so very special. Shouts of "Glory!" rise from my overflowing heart. And He loves me! That is glory; Glory indeed!

2. JESUS SHARED HIS FATHER'S GLORY BECAUSE HE LIVES IN HIS FATHER'S PRESENCE. Who can imagine or understand the wonder of that relationship? It goes beyond comprehension. The bitterest cry that ever came from His lips was when He endured our separation: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

For Jesus it was truly glorious to live in His Father's presence.

Is this why He told Father, "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world"?⁽²⁸⁾ His coming made possible to us the revelation of the presence of the Lord in our daily lives.

Years ago I visited Dhonavur in south India. This is where Amy Carmichael laboured so effectively and devotedly, rescuing girls from temple prostitution. There were fifteen hundred or more girls there at the time, from infancy up to young womanhood. In the centre of this place of love where homes were provided for these girls by Indian Christians as well as missionaries from different lands, was a place of worship.

Every time the clock in the tower of the worship centre struck the time on the hour believers would pause to thank the Lord for His presence, and to whisper their love to Him. This was a life changing experience for me. I was amongst saints who were aware that Jesus is here in every aspect of daily living. It seemed like heaven!

There is a vast difference between the fact of His presence and an awareness of it. Do you remember when the Assyrians surrounded the city of Dothan to capture Elisha? His servant cried out, "Alas, master what shall we do?" In today's language Elisha replied something like, "Relax kid. There are more on our side than on theirs."

The young servant well may have thought, “The old man has ‘flipped’ out. There’s just him and me here, and I have seen a whole army out there.”

Elisha prayed that the Lord his God would open his young man’s eyes, and He did! he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.⁽²⁹⁾ Doubtless this was the army of the Lord that camps around those who fear Him and rescues them.⁽³⁰⁾

Can’t you envisage the expression of relief that comes from the young man? Seeing that army of fire didn’t bring it into being. It was there all the time. But being aware of its presence doubtless made a great difference in the servant’s peace of mind, rest of spirit and inner joyful confidence in God.

There is glory in being aware of Christ’s presence through our day. He is here whether we know it or not, but what an amazing difference the awareness makes. “Christ lives in me,”⁽³¹⁾ “Filled with the Holy Spirit,”⁽³¹⁾ and “Filled to the measure of the fullness of God,”⁽³³⁾ should mean much more to us than biblical statements or doctrinal truth. They express the glorious reality of the presence of God in the ordinary person. That is glory indeed!

PRACTICE THE PRESENCE! Believers in past days often spoke about practising the presence of God. George Muller said that he came to where, when his mind wasn’t actively engaged in the affairs of the orphanages, it automatically turned to thoughts of Jesus.

God is no respecter of persons. We can experience this too! Why not use the hourly chime on your wrist watch, or make use of every time a door opens or shuts, a car honks, a telephone rings or a customer leaves, to bless the Lord for His presence and to express love to Him? This can establish reality within us, and cause us to live out now the provision of God’s glory in an appreciation of His love and an awareness of His presence.

3. JESUS SHARED HIS FATHER’S GLORY BECAUSE HE COMPLETED THE WORK HIS FATHER GAVE HIM TO DO.⁽³⁴⁾

4. Yes, there is glory in walking in the will of God. Jesus told His Father, “They have obeyed your word.”⁽³⁵⁾ Was He indicating that because of

this also He had given them the glory that His Father had given Him?
We believe so.

Paul talked of having once been a slave to sin, but having become a slave to righteousness.⁽³⁶⁾ Imagine that! Once he sinned and couldn't help it. Now he does what is right, and seems to say that he can't help that! At least he now has the ability by the power of the Holy Spirit to do what pleases the Lord.

Such a sense of inner cleanness and well-being fills the heart of those who have set themselves to walk in the will of God. I'd rather have this 'Amen' of God in my heart –His expression of approval–than the acceptance and praise of men. This too is glory.

The glory of God is the heart of the pattern of the purpose of God for His people today. We were made for pouring His glory into. He has given us the glory that His Father gave Him–that of living in the circle of God's favour and care, of knowing the presence of God with us in our daily living, and in being enabled to walk in obedience to the will of God. Thank you Jesus!

4

The Purpose of the Gift of Glory

Our beloved Lord Jesus leaves us in no doubt of the reason for giving us the glory that Father had given Him. It is so that “They may be one as we are one I in them and you in me.”

This is not the horizontal oneness for which Jesus asks immediately prior to this petition. This is vertical-our being as one with Him as He is with the Father. While this goes beyond our understanding, it does express Jesus desire that we may be enveloped in an intimate love relationship with Him. Love is the perfect unifying factor-the bond of perfection.

ASSOCIATED BLESSINGS

Coming into a oneness in love with Jesus through receiving the glory of entering into an appreciation of the Father’s love, a revelation of His presence and the delight of doing His will has a profound effect on our lives. The following are blessings associated with the impartation of His glory.

1. OVERFLOWING JOY. Jesus said, “I say these things . . . so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.”⁽³⁷⁾ To seek for joy is a major folly of our day. It is a self-defeating exercise. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.⁽³⁸⁾ That is, righteousness results in peace which results in joy. To seek joy will not bring the righteousness that causes joy, but rather tend to make us self-centred. And self-centredness will deprive us of joy. Joy is a by-product of walking in a love relationship with Jesus. It is a portion of the fruit of the Spirit. If we seek His glory with a pure heart, we will know His joy in abundant measure.

2. FREEDOM FROM CONDEMNATION. In Romans chapter eight when Paul writes of being justified and glorified, he asks, “Who will bring a charge against those whom God has chosen?”⁽³⁹⁾ His own answer stands clear: “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”⁽⁴⁰⁾

Bless the Lord, we no longer need to carry the uncomfortable and distressing burden of guilt which we once were crippled by. Now if God speaks to us about lack in our life, He speaks specifically and redemptively so that there is high encouragement in the voice of the Spirit to us.

3. A PLACE OF “NO RESERVATION”. Having not spared His son, will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?⁽⁴¹⁾ He withholds no good thing from those who walk uprightly.⁽⁴²⁾

4. THE CONFIDENCE OF “NO RESERVATION”. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?⁽⁴³⁾ Nothing and no one in all creation. Hallelujah!

5. ONGOING REVELATION. Returning to John seventeen, we see that Jesus’ prayer ends with a tender, beautiful expression of love. He says, “I have made you known to them and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”⁽⁴⁴⁾

You will notice that this speaks of continuing revelation. How vital this is! It is essential that we hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. We need specific revelation for our daily walk. How simply Jesus said it, “My sheep hear my voice and they follow me.”⁽⁴⁵⁾ Without clear hearing there can be no consistent following.

Too often in our personal lives and in our church life we seek to walk by yesterday’s revelation. And frequently, a yesterday revelation is today’s bondage. As with the manna in the wilderness, we cannot live today on yesterday’s provision of nourishment.

When Jesus told His Father, “I have given them the glory which you gave me.” He was speaking of amazing provision for us to live both triumphantly in His love, and to be containers for His glory. Thus, and only thus are we able to walk in step and in partnership with the Spirit in the high purposes of His pattern for His people in our day. What an amazing prayer and glorious provision so that He is able to be glorified in us as He deserves. As we set ourselves to keep in step with Him let us set our hearts to live in such a manner that “Everyone can see how great His glory is.” Amen? AMEN!

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5

Worship- Response to Glory

Because the glory of God is the heart of the pattern, the prime response from all creation, but particularly from the redeemed, is that of worship. Whenever the glory of God is mentioned in the Book of Revelation, worship ensues. Our word “worship” is a shortened version of the old wnglish word “Worth-ship.”

In beholding His glory we exclaim, “You alone are worthy!” A significant aspect of worship is involved in speaking forth His worth by describing God to God. He delights to hear us tell Him how attractive and precious and wonderful he is.

Worship God! Speak forth His worth! Extol His Majesty! Glorify Him with wonderful praise! Glory to God, for ever and ever!

WORSHIP IS LOVE-FLOW

Worship is not essentially music or certain kinds of song. It is not word or language, nor is it physical posture. It is expression of deep heart-felt appreciation, wonder and love. It is not so much the song, as our heart that he hears, and our love that He delights in. And yet He wants us to express our love to Him in every way we can, and even to discover new ways to do so.

Several years ago in a conference in Wales we were answering questions and discussing matters raised by those attending. The question was, “Why do we speak in tongues?” My answer was two-fold. Firstly it is an introduction to the supernatural of life in the Holy Spirit, for many of us, spirit is elevated above mind for the first time. Secondly tongues is a love language in the spirit. We speak and sing in tongues in worship that goes beyond natural and reasoned expression.

Later that night in my room I was asking, “Father did I misspeak myself tonight in a way that I need to apologise for? Was there shallowness in some answer that requires supplementary comment or more concise understanding?” For hours one verse of scripture kept

flooding my mind. It seemed so strange-“I speak in tongues more than you all.”⁽⁴⁶⁾

Eventually I saw that the Holy Spirit was giving me a key-hole view of a very precious secret in the life of the apostle Paul. He was not primarily scholar, teacher, theologian, missionary or apostle. He was first of all a worshipper! He expressed love to his beloved Lord more than anyone else. The love language of the Spirit was especially precious to him. Only an unfading, deep and intimate loving of our Lord Jesus was sufficient to keep Paul steadfast, triumphant and more than adequate for every eventuality in life!

PREISTHOOD SERVICE

It is extremely important to give priority to being a worshipper. We sometimes misuse the New Testament word “Service.” The service we are called to is the service of priesthood. The service of the sanctuary. Modern translations make this plain: Instead of calling us to “Serve with reverence and awe,” they call us to” Worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.”⁽⁴⁷⁾ Instead of referring to “Our reasonable service of worship,” or “Which is your spiritual worship.”⁽⁴⁸⁾ The service the New Testament calls us to is the high service of worship. Let us give priority to that!

REVELATION IN WORSHIP

When David established praise and worship among his followers he put it in the hands of the prophets and the sons of prophets. Why? Surely because prophecy is expressed in revelation, and it is vital to receive revelation from the Holy Spirit that we may worship acceptably.

Worship did not originate on the earth but around the throne of God. It was born in eternity. Worshipping how we think best will never do! Worshipping the way someone else does, or the way that worked well last time is very inadequate. We need to hear from Him what we should offer to Him in the expression of our love.

“SING TO THE LORD, ALL THE EARTH”

It probably should go without saying, and yet we need to note that worship is speaking or singing or showing our love **TO** the Lord, and not simply singing **ABOUT** Him. Our songs need to be in the first person. If

my wife were to tell our neighbours from time to time what a wonderful husband she has I'd be glad for it, but only if the main expression of her love was directly to me, and not just about me.

LINGER WHERE THE “DOVE” HOVERS

An old retired teacher told me once of sitting under the teaching of Evan Roberts of the Welsh revival. Evan Roberts had commented to the student preachers that at times they would come to a point in their preaching where there would be an enlarging of their spirits and special responsiveness in the hearers. His advice: “Tarry there. At that point the Holy Spirit is seeking to anoint some thought in a special way and bring it alive to the listeners.”

The same thought applies to worship. We need to tarry where the Spirit lingers. If the Dove hovers over a particular song or thought, let's take care that we don't speed ahead with mind worship and miss the special fragrance and anointing of the Spirit's purpose for those moments. We all know times when the same song is on our hearts repeatedly throughout the day, and day after day. This may not be because it has a “catchy” tune or is the “in” song. It well may be, because it is the vehicle chosen by the Holy Spirit to convey our love thought to the Lord.

LIFE-STYLE WORSHIP

There is a very real and important sense in which worship needs to be an integral part of our whole life. How could I possibly excel in worship if I were an unloving husband? How can people cheat in work situations, or dishonour God with “sharp” business practice and yet feel that a sweet singing or impressive oratory is acceptable worship? Such would be obnoxious to God.

The delightful truth is that when our hearts are right, and we do adore our precious Lord Jesus, then the making of a bed, the sweeping of a floor, the writing of a letter, the serving of a customer or the driving of a car can all be a fragrant love offering to the Lord our God.

We should not gather together with other Christians to worship God so much as to come together because we are worshippers and have been worshipping all week long. How melodious then will be the blending of our lives, heart and voices in corporate worship.

POURED-OUT FRAGRANCE

Once when meditating on how an alabaster jar of costly , sweet perfume was opened and poured out on the head of Jesus, His feet being wiped from falling tears of loving devotion, I cried, “Father, am I a deprived child in your kingdom? If only I could bring an extravagant gift like that and pour it out until the whole house were filled with fragrance! But how can I? You are not here now in literal physical person!

And I saw a heavenly scene-angelic worship around the throne of the Lamb. There were golden bowls full of sweet-the worship of the saints And the love-fragrance filled all that house. And I worshipped the King of Kings, the Lord of all. How glorious He is, and how worthy.

WHOLE-HEARTED WORSHIP

There is one thing that I find difficult to bear in worship gatherings. I suspect that is because Father doesn’t enjoy it either! It is that some sit so passively and worship so off-handedly. With what enthusiasm and joy we should join in worship. A high sense of wonder, delight and special privilege should mark us as we bless the Lord with our whole heart! How can anyone do less? I will praise Him and worship him with my whole heart, as long as I have breath in me to do so!

PRACTICAL WORSHIP

Sometimes my worship of the Lord sounds something like this, “Father, I worship you with what I have in my hand today. In love I offer you my hours and minutes, I offer you my walking and my driving, my thinking and my speaking, I offer you everything I have in my hand today. Lord, I lovingly lay at your feet my loved ones, the people I shall be in contact with today, and both the blessings and the difficulties I may encounter. They are yours! I want you to be glorified in them, and find pleasure in walking through the day together.”

There is something releasing and uplifting in laying a difficult situation or a person with major problems at the feet of Jesus thereby showing our confidence in Him that his wise love will accomplish in that life and in that situation.

WORSHIPPING ELDERS

In the church at Antioch leaders were so caught up in worship that meal times were forgotten. As they worshipped, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”⁽⁴⁹⁾

This is a helpful and important insight into a leadership gathering in the early church. When leaders give priority to worship, the Holy Spirit will not only give revelation for that, but also revelation direction for the life of the body.

How different, and how much more blessed, effective, peaceful and encouraging leadership meetings would be if priority were given to worship and then to hearing Father’s heart and mind for His work. Perhaps this would save us from needing to try to reconcile different points of view, or even of hearing them! We would all identify with the point of view of Jesus Christ, the head of the church, if we were to only desire that, having no inclination to speak of our own ideas!

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A Nation of Worshipers

The pattern God gave Moses clearly indicated that He desired a nation of worshippers. The insight the scripture gives to the nature of heaven leaves us with no doubt that the throngs whom home it becomes by sovereign grace and redeeming power will be of one heart and mind in a unity of pure love and total devotion to the One on the throne, the Son of God Himself. Solo worship seems incompatible with heaven. How we will worship then! A nation of worshippers indeed! God speed the day!

Let me share with you some insights into the desire of the Lord Jesus to bring His followers into a oneness even now, so that we may all be actively worshipping God without the restrictive limitation that division and carnal, excessive individuality bring.

Jesus was asked, “Why are your followers different, why are they not religious?” That seems to be at the core of a question asked of Him to which He replied with word picture of a bridegroom and His guests, a new patch on an old garment, and new wine in old wineskins. His final observation was, ‘No one after drinking old wine wants new wine, for he says, “The old wine is better.’ ”⁽⁵⁰⁾

What did He mean? Certainly not that the old wine of the religious system of the day was better. He was, in fact, explaining why His followers were not keeping to such tradition. Wuest translates this verse, “No one having partaken of fully-aged wine has a desire for wine that has just been made, for He says the fully-aged is pleasant.”

WINESKIN PROCESS

Because this statement is a portion of Jesus’ answer to a question about His disciples, we understand Him to be saying that He has taken them into hidden and restricted “wineskin experience” so that an essential hidden process can take place in their lives, bringing them to the pleasantness of of full-age maturity, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Vhrist.⁵¹

The gospel probably only covers about twenty-five days of the public ministry of Jesus, and no more than a couple of weeks of the activity of

the disciples. If it had all been written down, the world wouldn't have been able to contain the books.⁵² So we don't know what happened in the wineskin to bring Jesus' men to maturity to the extent that He would be wonderfully glorified in their selfless, wholehearted devotion to the Lord, to one another, and to His purpose for His church on earth.

Wouldn't you think perhaps on the day of Pentecost Jesus took the stopper off the wineskin and poured out a sweeter, more satisfying beverage than earth had ever previously tasted? Amen! It is so!

ESSENTIAL HIDDEN PROCESS

In understanding the process of wine making we can see the heart of Jesus in bringing His people to maturity in love-filled harmony to the end that we may be that nation of worshippers.

TOTAL BLENDING

The individual grapes need to be crushed and blended into an indivisible unity of harmonious love where no self-will, personal pride, nor carnal attitude of any kind can divide. There is a definition of Agape that reads, "The highest and noblest form of love that sees something infinitely precious in its object." That is the love of Christ to me, and the way He calls me to love my brothers.

We do not love only because it is commanded, nor simply because we have a loving disposition, but also because we see something exceedingly precious in our brother. If our glorious Lord saw something infinitely precious in me back there, as He does now too, then surely I can see enough of what He sees in my brother to love him in the measure that Christ requires.

It is difficult to understand being ordered to love unless we see the fact that what is commanded conveys the realisation that there is enabling grace to do it. Since it is commanded I CAN love as Christ loves.

Interestingly, when wine is made, care is taken not to include previously bruised grapes. Otherwise the quality of the whole batch would be lowered. If bruised new-comers enter a fellowship they need to be healed before they can healthily be blended in!

CLARIFICATION

An important step in the process is to bring us to a place of see-through purity, honesty and integrity where no cloudiness of sham, hypocrisy or uncleanness is found among us. This “clarification” is returned to repeatedly in wine making. We cannot escape the need for it in our personal lives and relationships with brothers and sisters.

A FINISHED WORK

We need to be brought to a place of absolute rest and contentment in Jesus. We need to come to a place where fomentation of carnal activity has ceased and where we have found contentment and fulfilment in the roles or niches God has chosen for us. This will mean that there is no jarring, clashing or competing, since father has a unique place for every one of us in His body.

Why do we find it difficult to learn that there is no promotion beyond the will of God? If I am selected by the Holy Spirit to be a door-keeper then it would be a demotion to aspire to a so called “higher” ministry such as apostle or prophet. Entertain no false thought of glamour or greater importance being attached to more public or visible ministries. By definition, a ministry is a servant function no matter of what nature, and is to be marked by meekness and humility. Anything else is false.

There is a rest for the people of God,⁽⁵³⁾ We need to enter into where we do nothing out of a sense of duty or obligation, nor because of the fact that the need is there, or because of the expectation of people. Our lives should be lives in obedience to the Lord so that we respond to the specific direction of the Holy Spirit, and so that we are kept free from the pressure that our religious systems so often impose on us.

A NEW SPARKLE

The purpose of God is to bring us to a place where a new quality of life pervades every part of life. We could look at the finished product, and remembering the initial ingredients, ask, “Whence the sparkle? Whence the tingle? Whence the flavour?”

We can do that with people too. There is a divine additive, the sparkle of the Spirit and the sweetness of Jesus that should supernaturally mark our lives.

SWEET CONTANCY

What value is there in a life buoyed up in the Spirit on Sunday, but “stale ale” on Monday? Very little indeed! The work of the Holy Spirit in a wineskin process is to bring us to a sweet constancy marks our lives. This constancy is surely the positive indication of a transformed, Christ-like character.

“A commandment, a new one, I am giving you, that you should be constantly loving one another with a divine and sacrificial love; even as I loved you, you also be loving one another. In this all shall know that you are my disciples; if you constantly have love among one another.”⁽⁵⁴⁾ — Jesus.

“Be constantly having faith in God.”⁽⁵⁵⁾

“Be constantly controlled by the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, Giving thanks always concerning all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father, putting yourselves in subjection to one another in the fear of Christ.”⁽⁵⁶⁾-Paul.

What we are filled with we are controlled by! It just isn’t enough to claim we are filled with the Spirit unless we are constantly controlled by the Spirit. And if we are controlled by the Holy Spirit constantly, then with the harmony of good will, practical brotherhood and mutual honouring of all who are in the “Family,” we will become the nation of worshippers bringing glory to God as He desires and deserves. This is part of the “Pattern.”

IN THE SKIN—WITH JESUS

Here is the key to the transformation of men of diverse background and understanding. How can Simon the Zealot whose great desire is the violent over-throw of the Roman rule share life with Matthew the tax collector who has associated with them? How can Peter, always active, learn to walk in close companionship with John, the dreamer? Surely it is only because Jesus is in the skin with them, and only as His presence has a great effect on them all.

They came to know Jesus intimately. They walked the hours of the day with Him, getting caught in the same rain showers, sitting at the same

meal table, and sharing times of rejection as well as exhilarating joy when multitudes hungered responsively for the word of the Lord, marvelling at God's power.

They found out what pleases the Lord.⁽⁵⁷⁾ They discovered is likes and dislikes. He may be Saviour and Lord to us, but without knowing the preferences of likes and dislikes, how can He be a friend?

Why do some Christians come home vacation spiritually dry? Is it because they don't understand that our dear Lord Jesus enjoys recreation and fun, and enjoys leisure and laughter? He is not friend because we have not clothed Him with personality. Perhaps we need to take up a petition to get Jesus released . . . released from being locked into "Meetings" and devotions, but banned from other areas of life!

Those men were aware of Jesus' involvement in every area of life—blending, permeating and transforming the moments and events of the day, and every day.

MAJOR INFLUENCE

Because Jesus was such a dominant influence in their lives they learned not to be influenced, swayed, affected, squeezed, pressured and moulded by external circumstance and relationship. They learned not to be "Controlled" by dominant human personalities, only Jesus. What a valuable lesson to learn! We are also privileged to be free from the demands of time and events and people as they seek to control us and crowd out the reign of Jesus in our lives.

THEY OBSERVED HIS REACTIONS

Jesus didn't react as other men do to need, temptation, and public opinion whether of opposition or honour.

His sense of VALUES was so different! The value He placed on a child or outcast, on comforts and possessions, on human persuasion or dissuasion were quite startling. It was His Father's desire that was of ultimate importance to Jesus. The value He placed on things was in direct proportion to their importance to His Father.

Jesus' FULFILMENT came not from self-indulgence, but in self denial. It was in doing His Father's will, in serving, in imparting life, and in future worth rather than in immediate but temporary gratification.

No doubt the disciples were amazed at the CHOICES Jesus made. They were so different from other men's choices. His choices were so love motivated, so selfless and so God-glorifying. What an effect this must have had on them in the skin with Jesus!

It would have been obvious that His life was not CONTROLLED by circumstances, environment or natural limitations. What a man the Son of Man was!

They watched His ATTITUDES, He was very compassionate and quite self effacing, and totally single-minded. He still is! He knows what He wants to accomplish in our lives, what He purposes for the church, and has set His heart on a glorious kingdom!

Jesus' life was such a well of pure love. His controlling desire was for His Father's pleasure and glory. Time and again those men must have measured themselves against Jesus, as a growing child measures himself against his father's height. How abysmally lacking they must have felt at the time.

But gradually a process took place that must have changed them into something new and entirely different! We need to know what things God does instantaneously in our lives by grace alone, and what things require a process of development and maturing.

Jesus takes His people onto a wineskin experience today to bring us to where He is highly glorified in a united Christ-like people and a nation of worshippers. Let's do everything we can to expedite the purposes of God within us, allowing the Holy Spirit to be our teacher, leader, guide, enabler and Lord.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON WINE MAKING

There is a relationship between the size of the vat or wineskin and the time it takes for the process to be completed. It involves a relationship between cubic content and surface area. Perhaps this is the reason for the Holy Spirit's emphasis today on home fellowships and meetings.

When the process is complete the wine is left for a season while "Aging" takes place. During aging further clarification occurs, acidity decreases, and stabilization occurs. It is very easy to have too much "acidity" in our lives, isn't it? We need the mellowing work of the Holy

Spirit transforming us into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Stabilization in this context means the chemical change that has taken place in the process of wine making becomes fixed. The ingredients will not separate again.

Lastly, today some Christians boast of a freedom to drink wine and/or other alcoholic beverages. This writer would like to testify to a higher freedom—the freedom not to do so! This is ultimately the only safe position from either the danger of coming into personal bondage at this point, or the danger of setting an example that brings others into the awful bondage of alcoholism.

In Cape Town an earnest Christian shared that he had never known a really mature and Godly believer, truly walking in close fellowship with Jesus, who was even occasionally a social drinker. That deserves serious consideration.

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Lord Jesus, Your Kingdom Come!

In the pilgrimage to discover how to live in partnership with the Holy Spirit and to keep in step with Him, this cry has often risen from our heart, “YOUR KINGDOM COME! YOUR WILL BE DONE AS IT IS IN HEAVEN!”⁽⁵⁸⁾ Yes! That is the pattern, His will being done as it is in heaven. God hasten the day!

“As the deer pants for stream of water” David cried, “So my soul pants for you, O God. my soul pants for God, the living God.”⁽⁵⁹⁾

With joy we recognize that there is a God given thirst among the saints today. There is a thirst for His kingdom to come, for Him to reign unchallenged and unrivalled. Bless God for such longing!

There is an Old Testament story of an army suffering from intense thirst. They are called to dig ditches in a dry place. The next morning water flowed from the desert, and the land was filled with water.⁽⁶⁰⁾

The supernatural supplying of their thirst was also the means of putting down armed rebellion.

Let us today commence digging deep ditches of desire! If we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our heart. “What the wicked dreads will overtake him; What the righteous desires will be granted.”⁶¹

“The messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, WILL come, says the Lord Almighty.”⁽⁶²⁾

We cry for the God who is here, to come! To come in a new way, in a full revelation of His glory. To come with power. To come as King!

Surely these statements reach that, “What you desire you get!”

Stir up Godly desire! Stir it up by focusing thought, song and speech on the day to come when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.⁽⁶³⁾ Stir up desire by expressing spiritual thirst in prayerful confidence to the Lord. Stir up desire by worshipping the King all the day long. Praising Him for the

certainty of the pattern being established on the earth in the hearts of men and in the rule of nations. Yes, they WILL become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ!⁽⁶⁴⁾ He shall reign! And of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end!⁽⁶⁵⁾

Glory to the King! Live for His glory alone. Worship the King of Glory!

To the only god our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forever! ⁽⁶⁶⁾ It will be so! It is so! Amen and Amen!

References

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