

# Communion

## Be subject to the Father and live

(edited transcript)

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When we consider the grace of God towards us, we need to consider His Fatherhood. In the book of Hebrews, we read:

*"...we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!"* (Hebrews 12: 9)

In His grace, God comes to us as a Father and He speaks to us, calling us to know Him. He is not a remote Deity who relates to us from His omnipotence and omniscience, doing things *to* us. Although He does sometimes speak very directly to us, He does not force us. Rather, God exhorts and entreats us, just as a father does his children. He talks to us about who we are because He *knows* us. If we are known by Him, having been born of Him into His kingdom, and if we are walking with Him by faith, then God our Heavenly Father is the Father of our spirit.

### The Father knows you

As the Father of our spirit, God has crafted a life for each one of us. He is exhorting us to be fully

resolved in accepting that He *is* personally crafting our unique life, including our abilities and inabilities; our capacities and incapacities; the natural characteristics and limits with which we were born; the family into which we were born; and the things that have gone right and wrong in our lives. The Father of our spirit is exhorting us each to accept this from His hand. If we *can't* accept it, we will not be able to progress in our Christian maturity and will not find the healing the Lord Jesus is able to bring to us in every aspect of our common humanity.

By 'common humanity' I mean that we are all born mortal; we all have a personality and we all have a spirit, which is our identity. We all have a physical body and a whole package of things that go with our being human - our genetics, our emotions, our intellect - everything that makes up who we are. God the Father has packaged all these things specifically and uniquely for each one of us. He knows every detail and every circumstance of the life He has crafted for you and for me.

On His journey to the cross, the third and fourth wounds Jesus suffered were His chastening<sup>1</sup> for our peace, then His scourging<sup>2</sup> for our healing (Isaiah 53:5). It is after we've joined His chastening for our peace, and have therefore come to peace, that we can join His scourging for our healing. Jesus' brutal scourging with a cat o' nine tails inflicted so many little wounds on Him they became one deep wound. All those

<sup>1</sup> Before the Sanhedrin in the house of Caiaphas the High Priest

<sup>2</sup> By the soldiers under Pontius Pilate the Roman governor

little wounds were for the healing of all the infirmities of our common humanity.

We *need* this healing, because sin is in the world, and we are sinful. We're mortal. Things go wrong. Things break down. There are limits in and around us everywhere. Perhaps we grew up in a certain way that produced certain difficulties; perhaps we had bad attitudes that became entrenched; perhaps things we were afraid of as children allowed fear to take root and grow in our hearts, setting our way of life. There may be a tendency in one family line towards negative thoughts and depression, and in another towards hot-headed, hot-blooded reactions. Our Father, the Father of our spirit, knows *all* these things. He knows us individually, and He wants to heal us, individually and specifically, in our spirit.

By the wisdom and love of God the Father, Jesus His Son suffered and shed His blood for us, for each and every infirmity He knew needed healing. If we can accept and thank the Father for the life and pathway He crafted for Jesus *the* Son, can we also accept and thank the Father that He has done the same for us who, in Jesus, are also His sons?

### **Be subject to the Father**

When Jesus was twelve years of age, He went into the temple in Jerusalem, without the knowledge of His parents Mary and Joseph, and conversed with the learned men of Israel in a way that astonished them (Luke 2:41-47). Among these men would have been elders, scribes, and Pharisees who had studied the word of God for decades. Jesus astonished them because, although only a boy, He *was* the Word (John 1: 14). These men had studied the word that had testified of Christ's coming, and here He was, the Word made flesh, sitting right in front of them.

When Mary and Joseph couldn't find Jesus among their relatives and friends returning home from Jerusalem, they went back to the city looking for Him, and after three days' searching, found Him in the temple courts. They were perplexed and indignant over His actions, not understanding what He was doing, asking, 'Son, why have you treated us like this?' (Luke 2:48) They had not truly comprehended who He was, even though the angel of the Lord had spoken to them about Him (Matthew 1:20, 2:13,19-20; Luke 1:26-38). But Jesus answered His parents, 'Did you not know I would be about my Father's business?' Whether Joseph was offended by this reply we don't know, but Jesus went home from there and was subject to His parents in all things (Luke 2:41-52).

Even though Jesus was the Son of God, the Word of God in flesh, He had to learn as a boy to be subject to His parents. In being subject to Joseph His earthly father, Jesus was subject to the crafting of his heavenly Father, living in a carpenter's humble home and doing His daily chores until the time came for Him, in submission to the Father of His spirit, to be about His Heavenly Father's business, doing the works the Father, in His eternal purpose, had appointed for Him in His life as the Son of God.

Unlike us, Jesus didn't need healing. He didn't grow up in any way contrary to the name and predestination His Father gave Him. But *we* are contrary, every one of us. We have been given a name by God but have assumed another name for ourselves. He has a predestination for us, for who He intends us to be and what He intends us to do, but we've taken our raw material to be and to do otherwise.

God wants to bring us back by degrees and in particular ways to the kind intention of His will for us, but we're inclined to pull away from Him because we don't like and don't want to be

subject to the limits that God has placed upon us. We don't even want to acknowledge that we have limits, but the truth is, we do.

Even so, our Heavenly Father gives each of us a talent, based upon the various abilities we have (not those we wish we had) and on what is true about us. This talent is meant to be multiplied. That means we need to apply ourselves in the areas of our abilities. If the Lord has given you an ability, go and apply yourself to it and see whether it is part of your talent. It may be that you are very good at something that has no part in anything, but still apply yourself so that God can lay hold of that ability as He wills, to see it multiply life.

### Understanding by participating

It's important for us not to stop at illumination by the word of God. We all need illumination, for without it we're stuck on wayside ground where nothing happens; where the word comes but never germinates. Our Illumination by the word is essential. However, it is possible to be illuminated by the word but not go on to purchase understanding, which is the test for a son of God.

Illumination comes and we receive the word joyfully. Then tribulation, or suffering, comes because of the word. Now, we know that Jesus suffered *for* us and joined us to the fellowship of His suffering and His scourging by which we are healed. Therefore, when tribulation comes because of the word, we can know it is the Father who is scourging us, just as we need.

*"...those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives."*  
(Hebrews 12: 6)

Because Jesus was scourged *for* us, we now have a participation in *His* scourging. So then, as we are illuminated by the word, we can be

matured as sons by participating with Jesus, thereby purchasing understanding and coming to a knowledge of the Holy One. There is no fast track to the knowledge of the Holy One. As an illustration, if you've only got as far in your piano lessons as playing Jungle Drums, there's no point in thinking you can play a Beethoven sonata. Only unhappiness can result from the attempt! You'd be far better to enjoy 'Jungle Drums' until, by diligent practice, you move on to something a little more advanced.

At any point in time you can only be what you are at that time. Why fight and resent that? Why resent how you're made? You're only fighting with God, and that will never end well. What does it matter if you're not good at something you've always coveted doing well? What good is worrying about whether you've become what you think your dad wanted you to become, or whether he even noticed? It is of no lasting consequence whether you think your education was better or worse than anyone else's. Are we subjecting ourselves to our own aspirations, anxieties and assessments? To our senses of failure or success? To meeting the expectations and speculations of others? These are only vain pursuits to feel better about ourselves. Rather than having these things fill our heads and press down upon us without ever letting go, let's subject ourselves to the Father of our spirit and live.

We need healing in these areas! One of the reasons we entreat our young adults as we do is that they have a window as young people to address some of these things. But at a certain point, we must all accept who we are, for we *are* who we are. We've got to look at ourselves realistically and accept that this *is* who we are; this is our package. We need to be subject to the Father: 'What do You want me to do with what You've given me? How do I participate in offering? How can I be subject to You today?'

The life we find in being subject to the Father of our spirit is *resurrection* life - life out of death. Our healing comes through our participation in the chastening, the scourging, of Jesus Christ. We need the help of the Holy Spirit. We need our thinking washed by the word to clear away our own priorities and realign us with the priorities of God. We need to subject ourselves to the Father of our spirit and live, rather than tolerating death - the things that have no life and can't multiply life; the things we tolerate because we want what we think they offer.

### How will we respond to the Father's call?

God knows every intricate detail about you, even the number of hairs on your head (Luke 12:7). He knows every microscopic detail of your biological life - your nervous system; the beat of your heart; your thoughts, desires and wishes; all the things that go on inside you. Your Father, the Father of your spirit, knows them all. He *knows*, and He's crafted a package for your life, subject to Him and joined to the offering of Christ, that will heal you and deliver you from anything that is not of Him.

There is *no* life outside of the offering of Christ, and no life for us except that we join His offering and become subject to our heavenly Father who is speaking to each one of us, personally, asking, 'Will you be subject to Me and live? Or are you going to go on being subject day by day to all the other things that spin your emotions and mind around and set the priorities of your life?' There are only two choices we can make, and each has an opposite outcome. Either we subject ourselves to the Father and live, or we don't, and we die. Our choice is that serious, and we need to be real about that. God is not joking or giving us another option. It's life or it's death.

There is great joy, simplicity and freedom in the obedience of sonship, in the liberty of being a son of God. In contrast, a self-named person has no liberty but is subject every day to what they can achieve by and for themselves. That is so insecure! Such a person has no foundation. But God is our rock and our foundation and is entreating us to come and know Him as the Father of our spirit. Will you come to Him?

You may think that you don't know enough, or don't have enough clarity to come. Or you may think you know what coming to Him means. But can you put those thoughts aside and just come to Him, presenting yourself to Him without any preconceived thought or imagination? Even in prayer, our imagination can run wild as we try to imagine all the virtues we want or think we should have and then try to have them. For example, we can easily pray about something we're afraid of, and even as we're praying we're trying to feel full of faith so that the fear vanishes. But that doesn't work and it's terribly unhelpful! In the same way, there's no point in us trying to imagine who the Father is. He is who He is, and He's calling to us, to you and to me, to come and be subject to Him.

If you really *haven't* been subject to Him but have consciously been 'out there', then you've been a disobedient and unruly person. But He is calling you from unruliness back to Him.

How will we respond? Let's turn and come to Him in faith as the Father of our spirit, wanting to be subject to Him, to be healed and to live. We have inherited so many infirmities and have so much baggage. There is so much imposition of sin upon us, whether sins we have committed, or others have committed that have impacted us. There is much we face just by being a person! We can't resolve all these things, yet the Lord has crafted the package of our lives for us so that we can be healed; so that

the things in us that are lame do not cause us to be turned out of the way (Hebrews 12:13).

We can make straight paths for our feet today by believing and turning to the word the Lord has spoken to us from His Scriptures. We can turn to the face of God the Father who is speaking to us; to His Fatherhood, subjecting ourselves to Him so that we can receive His love and can therefore love Him as we ought, by the love of God.

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