

EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST

(3)

Message Eleven

The Fellowship of the Eternal Life— the Reality of Living in the Body of Christ

RA *Hymns*: 1191

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:1—2:2

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life

1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:4 And these things we write that our joy may be made full.

1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;

1 John 2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for those of the whole world.

I. John's Epistles (especially his first Epistle) unfold the mystery of the fellowship of the eternal life—1 John 1:3-4, 6-7:

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:4 And these things we write that our joy may be made full.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

A. Fellowship is the flow of the eternal life within all the believers, illustrated by the flow of the water of life in the New Jerusalem; the reality of the Body of Christ, the church life in actuality, is the flow of the Lord Jesus within us, and this flowing One must have the preeminence within us—vv. 2-4; Rev. 22:1; Col. 1:18b; cf. Ezek. 47:1.

1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:4 And these things we write that our joy may be made full.

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Col 1:18b ... He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Ezek 47:1 Then He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the south side of the house, on the south of the altar.

B. Fellowship is the flowing Triune God—the Father is the fountain of life, the Son is the spring of life, and the Spirit is the river of life; this flowing issues in the totality of eternal life—the New Jerusalem—John 4:14b; Rev. 22:1-2.

John 4:14b ... but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water springing up into eternal life.

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Rev 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

C. Fellowship is the imparting of the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—into the believers as their unique portion and blessing for them to enjoy today and for eternity—1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 13:14; Num. 6:22-27.

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Num 6:22 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,

Num 6:23 Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the children of Israel; you shall say to them,

Num 6:24 Jehovah bless you and keep you;

Num 6:25 Jehovah make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you;

Num 6:26 Jehovah lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Num 6:27 So shall they put My name upon the children of Israel, that I Myself may bless them.

D. Fellowship indicates a putting away of private interests and a joining with others for a certain common purpose; hence, to be in the divine fellowship is to put aside our private interests and join with the apostles and the Triune God for the carrying out of God's purpose—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

E. Fellowship comes from teaching; if we teach wrongly and differently from the apostles' teaching, the teaching of God's economy, our teaching will produce a sectarian, divisive fellowship—Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3-6; 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 3:8-9; 5:18.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 Tim 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

1 Tim 1:5 But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of unfeigned faith;

1 Tim 1:6 From which things some, having misaimed, have turned aside to vain talking,

1 Tim 6:3 If anyone teaches different things and does not consent to healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness,

1 Tim 6:4 He is blinded with pride, understanding nothing, but is diseased with questionings and contentions of words, out of which come envy, strife, slanders, evil suspicions,

2 Cor 3:8 How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory?

2 Cor 3:9 For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory.

2 Cor 5:18 But all things are out from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

F. First John reveals the principles of the divine fellowship, 2 John reveals that we must have no fellowship with those who deny Christ (vv. 7-11), and 3 John reveals that we should stay in the one fellowship of God's family by sending forward those who travel for the gospel and the ministry of the word in a manner worthy of God and by not loving to be first in the church (vv. 5-10).

2 John 7 For many deceivers went out into the world, those who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

2 John 8 Look to yourselves that you do not lose the things which we wrought, but that you may receive a full reward.

2 John 9 Everyone who goes beyond and does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

2 John 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not say to him, Rejoice!

2 John 11 For he who says to him, Rejoice, shares in his evil works.

3 John 5 Beloved, you do faithfully in whatever you have wrought for the brothers, and this for strangers,

3 John 6 Who testified to your love before the church; whom you will do well to send forward in a manner worthy of God;

3 John 7 For on behalf of the Name they went out, taking nothing from the Gentiles.

3 John 8 We therefore ought to support such ones that we may become fellow workers in the truth.

3 John 9 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not receive us.

3 John 10 For this reason, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he does, babbling against us with evil words; and not being satisfied with these, neither does he himself receive the brothers, and those intending to do so he forbids and casts out of the church.

II. The fellowship of the eternal life is the reality of living in the Body of Christ in the oneness of the Spirit—1 Cor. 10:16-18; Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:3:

1 Cor 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?

1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Cor 10:18 Look at Israel according to the flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices those who have fellowship with the altar?

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

A. We enter into the vertical aspect of the divine fellowship by the divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit; this aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with the Triune God in our loving Him—2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 1:3, 6; Mark 12:30.

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;

Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."

B. We enter into the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship by the human spirit; this aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with one another by the exercise of our spirit in our loving one another—Phil. 2:1; Rev. 1:10; 1 John 1:2-3, 7; 1 Cor. 16:18; Mark 12:31; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13-15.

Phil 2:1 If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,

Rev 1:10 I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,

1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

1 Cor 16:18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Acknowledge therefore such ones.

Mark 12:31 The second is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.

Rom 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves the other has fulfilled the law.

Rom 13:9 For, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Rom 13:10 Love does not work evil to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Gal 5:13 For you were called for freedom, brothers; only do not turn this freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Gal 5:14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Gal 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another.

C. The one divine fellowship is an interwoven fellowship—the horizontal fellowship is interwoven with the vertical fellowship:

1. The initial experience of the apostles was the vertical fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, but when the apostles reported the eternal life to others, they experienced the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship—1 John 1:2-3; cf. Acts 2:42.

1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
2. Our horizontal fellowship with the saints brings us into vertical fellowship with the Lord; then our vertical fellowship with the Lord brings us into horizontal fellowship with the saints.
3. We must maintain both the vertical and horizontal aspects of the divine fellowship in order to be healthy spiritually—cf. 1 John 1:7, 9.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

D. The divine fellowship is everything in the Christian life:

1. When fellowship disappears, God also disappears; God comes as the fellowship—2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 22:1.

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
2. In this divine fellowship God is interwoven with us; this interweaving is the mingling of God and man to bring the divine constituent into our spiritual being for our growth and transformation in life—Lev. 2:4-5.

Lev 2:4 And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

Lev 2:5 And if your offering is a meal offering baked on a flat plate, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened.

3. The divine fellowship blends us, tempers us, adjusts us, harmonizes us, and mingles us together into one Body—1 Cor. 10:16-18; 12:24-25.

1 Cor 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?

1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Cor 10:18 Look at Israel according to the flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices those who have fellowship with the altar?

1 Cor 12:24 But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,

1 Cor 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.

III. In order to remain in the enjoyment of the divine fellowship, we need to take Christ as our sin offering for the indwelling sin in our nature and as our trespass offering for the sinful deeds in our conduct—1 John 1:8-9; 3:20-21; Lev. 4:3; 5:6; John 1:29; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24-25:

1 John 1:8 If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 3:20 Because if our heart blames us, it is because God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not blame us, we have boldness toward God;

Lev 4:3 If the anointed priest sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him present a bull of the herd without blemish to Jehovah for a sin offering for his sin that he committed.

Lev 5:6 And he shall bring his trespass offering to Jehovah for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a sheep or a goat, as a sin offering; and the priest shall make expiation for him on account of his sin.

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Rom 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,

2 Cor 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Pet 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.

1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

A. Sin is the evil nature of Satan, who injected himself into man through Adam's fall and has now become the sinful nature of lawlessness that is dwelling, acting, and working as a law in fallen man—Rom. 5:12, 19a, 21a; 6:14; 7:11, 14, 17-23; Psa. 51:5; 1 John 3:4; cf. 2 Thes. 2:3, 7-8.

Rom 5:12 Therefore just as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin, death; and thus death passed on to all men because all have sinned-

Rom 5:19a For just as through the disobedience of one man the many were constituted sinners, ...

Rom 5:21a In order that just as sin reigned in death, ...

Rom 6:14 For sin will not lord it over you, for you are not under the law but under grace.

Rom 7:11 For sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

Rom 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am fleshly, sold under sin.

Rom 7:17 Now then it is no longer I that work it out, but sin that dwells in me.

Rom 7:18 For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not.

Rom 7:19 For I do not do the good which I will; but the evil which I do not will, this I practice.

Rom 7:20 But if what I do not will, this I do, it is no longer I that work it out but sin that dwells in me.

Rom 7:21 I find then the law with me who wills to do the good, that is, the evil is present with me.

Rom 7:22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man,

Rom 7:23 But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me a captive to the law of sin which is in my members.

Psa 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, / And in sin did my mother conceive me.

1 John 3:4 Everyone who practices sin practices lawlessness also, and sin is lawlessness.

2 Thes 2:3 Let no one deceive you in any way, because it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition,

2 Thes 2:7 For it is the mystery of lawlessness that is now operating, but only until the one now restraining goes out of the way.

2 Thes 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of His coming),

B. Taking Christ as our sin offering means that our old man is dealt with (Rom. 6:6), that sin in the nature of fallen man is condemned (8:3), that Satan as sin itself is destroyed (Heb. 2:14), that the world is judged, and that the ruler of the world is cast out (John 12:31):

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;

Rom 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,

Heb 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.

1. The word *ruler* in *the ruler of this world* implies authority or power and the struggle for power—Luke 4:5-8; cf. Matt. 20:20-21, 24; 3 John 9.

Luke 4:5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth in a moment of time.

Luke 4:6 And the devil said to Him, To You I will give all this authority and their glory, because to me it has been delivered, and to whomever I want I give it.

Luke 4:7 If You therefore worship before me, it shall all be Yours.

Luke 4:8 And Jesus answered and said to him, It is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve."

Matt 20:20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, worshipping and asking something of Him.

Matt 20:21 And He said to her, What do you want? She said to Him, Say that these two sons of mine will sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your kingdom.

Matt 20:24 And when the ten heard this, they were indignant concerning the two brothers.

3 John 9 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not receive us.
2. The struggle for power is the result, the issue, of the flesh, sin, Satan, the world, and the ruler of the world—Gal. 5:16-17, 24-26.

Gal 5:16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these oppose each other that you would not do the things that you desire.

Gal 5:24 But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts.

Gal 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Gal 5:26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.
3. The law of sin in our flesh is the spontaneous power, strength, and energy to struggle

with God; the law of the sin offering is the law of the life of the pneumatic Christ, whom we enjoy, to automatically and spontaneously free us from the law of sin—Rom. 7:23; 8:2; Lev. 6:24-30; cf. 7:1-10.

Rom 7:23 But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me a captive to the law of sin which is in my members.

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Lev 6:24 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,

Lev 6:25 Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered the sin offering shall be slaughtered before Jehovah; it is most holy.

Lev 6:26 The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the Tent of Meeting.

Lev 6:27 Whatever touches its flesh shall be holy. And when any of its blood splashes on a garment, you shall wash whatever was splashed in a holy place.

Lev 6:28 But the earthen vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken; and if it is boiled in a bronze vessel, it shall be scoured and rinsed in water.

Lev 6:29 Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy.

Lev 6:30 And any sin offering of which some of the blood is brought into the Tent of Meeting to make expiation in the Holy Place shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire.

Lev 7:1 And this is the law of the trespass offering; it is most holy;

Lev 7:2 In the place where they slaughter the burnt offering they shall slaughter the trespass offering, and its blood he shall sprinkle on and around the altar.

Lev 7:3 And he shall present from it all its fat: the fat tail, and the fat that covers the inward parts,

Lev 7:4 And the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the appendage upon the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys.

Lev 7:5 And the priest shall burn them on the altar as an offering by fire to Jehovah; it is a trespass offering.

Lev 7:6 Every male among the priests may eat of it; it shall be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy.

Lev 7:7 The trespass offering is like the sin offering; there is one law for them: The priest who makes expiation with it shall have it.

Lev 7:8 And the priest who presents anyone's burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has presented.

Lev 7:9 And every meal offering that is baked in an oven and everything that is made in a pot or on a flat plate shall belong to the priest who presents it.

Lev 7:10 And every other meal offering, mingled with oil or dry, shall be for all the sons of Aaron, to each alike.

C. We partake of Christ as our sin offering in the sense of enjoying Him as our life, the life that bears others' sins, so that we may be able to bear the problems of God's people by ministering Christ to them as the sin-dealing life for them to be kept in the oneness of the Spirit—1 John 5:16; Lev. 10:17.

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

Lev 10:17 Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary? For it is most holy, and He gave it to you to bear the iniquity of the assembly, to make expiation for them before Jehovah.

D. Through our genuine, intimate, living, and loving fellowship with God, who is light (1 John 1:5; Col. 1:12), we will realize that we are sinful, and we will take Christ as our sin offering and trespass offering:

1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;

1. The more we love the Lord and enjoy Him, the more we will know how evil we are—
 Isa. 6:5; Luke 5:8; Rom. 7:18.
 Isa 6:5 Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! / For I am a man of unclean lips, / And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; / Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.
 Luke 5:8 And when Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord.
 Rom 7:18 For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not.
2. Realizing that we have a sinful nature and taking Christ as our sin offering cause us to be judged and subdued, and this realization preserves us, for it causes us not to have any confidence in ourselves—Phil. 3:3; cf. Exo. 4:6.
 Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,
 Exo 4:6 And Jehovah further said to him, Now put your hand into your bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, there his hand was, leprous as white as snow.
3. Man, created by God for the purpose of expressing and representing God, should be for nothing other than God and should be absolutely for God; thus, anything we do out of ourselves, whether good or evil, is for ourselves, and since it is for ourselves and not for God, it is sinful in the eyes of God; sin is being for the self—Gen. 1:26; Isa. 43:7; Rom. 3:23:
 Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
 Isa 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory.
 Rom 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
 a. Serving the Lord for ourselves is sin; preaching ourselves is sin—Num. 28:2; 2 Kings 5:20-27; Matt. 7:22-23; 2 Cor. 4:5.
 Num 28:2 Command the children of Israel and say to them, My offering, My food for My offerings by fire of a satisfying fragrance to Me, you shall be careful to present to Me at its appointed time.
 2 Kings 5:20 Gehazi, the attendant of Elisha the man of God said, Now my master has spared Naaman this Syrian by not receiving from his hand that which he brought. As Jehovah lives, I will run after him and take something from him.
 2 Kings 5:21 So Gehazi pursued Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he alighted from the chariot to meet him and said, Is all well?
 2 Kings 5:22 And he said, All is well. My master has sent me, saying, Now at this moment two young men from among the sons of the prophets have come to me from the hill country of Ephraim; please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothes.
 2 Kings 5:23 And Naaman said, Please take two talents. And he urged him and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothes, and gave them to two of his attendants; and they carried them before him.
 2 Kings 5:24 And when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and deposited them in the house. And he sent the men away, and they departed.
 2 Kings 5:25 And he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, Where have you come from, Gehazi? And he said, Your servant has not gone anywhere.
 2 Kings 5:26 And he said to him, Did not my heart go with you when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive silver and to receive clothing and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male servants and female servants?

2 Kings 5:27 Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to you and to your seed forever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

Matt 7:22 Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, was it not in Your name that we prophesied, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name did many works of power?

Matt 7:23 And then I will declare to them: I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.

2 Cor 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

b. Doing our righteous deeds, such as giving alms, praying, and fasting, for ourselves to express and display ourselves is sin—Matt. 6:1-6

Matt 6:1 But take care not to do your righteousness before men in order to be gazed at by them; otherwise, you have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens.

Matt 6:2 Therefore when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full.

Matt 6:3 But you, when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

Matt 6:4 So that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Matt 6:5 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full.

Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

c. Loving others for ourselves (for our name, position, benefit, and pride) is sin; raising up our children for ourselves and for our future is sin—Luke 14:12-14; cf. 1 Cor. 7:14.

Luke 14:12 And He said also to the one who had invited Him, When you make a morning meal or a dinner, do not call your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and it become a repayment to you.

Luke 14:13 But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,

Luke 14:14 And you will be blessed, because they do not have anything with which to repay you; for it will be repaid to you in the resurrection of the righteous.

1 Cor 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the brother; otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

4. The Lord uses our failures to show us how horrible, ugly, and abominable we are, causing us to forsake all that is from the self and to completely depend on God—Psa. 51; Luke 22:31-32; Rom. 8:28.

Psa 51:1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; / According to the greatness of Your compassions blot out my transgressions.

Psa 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, / And from my sin cleanse me.

Psa 51:3 For I do know my transgressions, / And my sin is before me continually.

Psa 51:4 Against You and You alone have I sinned, / And I have done what is evil in Your sight. / Therefore You are righteous when You speak; / You are clear when You judge.

Psa 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, / And in sin did my mother conceive me.

Psa 51:6 Behold, You delight in truth in the inward parts; / And in the hidden part You would make known wisdom to me.

Psa 51:7 Purge my sin with hyssop, and I will be clean; / Wash me, and I will be whiter

than snow.

Psa 51:8 Let me hear gladness and joy, / That the bones which You have broken may exult.

Psa 51:9 Hide Your face from my sins, / And blot out all my iniquities.

Psa 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, / And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psa 51:11 Do not cast me from Your presence, / And do not take the Spirit of Your holiness away from me.

Psa 51:12 Restore to me the gladness of Your salvation, / And sustain me with a willing spirit.

Psa 51:13 I will teach transgressors Your ways, / And sinners will turn back to You.

Psa 51:14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation; / And my tongue will ring forth Your righteousness.

Psa 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, / And my mouth will declare Your praise.

Psa 51:16 For You do not delight in sacrifice; / Otherwise I would offer it; / You take no pleasure in burnt offerings.

Psa 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; / A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

Psa 51:18 Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion; / Build the walls of Jerusalem.

Psa 51:19 Then You will delight in the sacrifices of righteousness, / In burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; / Then they will offer bulls upon Your altar.

Luke 22:31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked to have you all to sift you as wheat.

Luke 22:32 But I have made petition concerning you that your faith would not fail; and you, once you have turned again, establish your brothers.

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

E. To take Christ as the reality of the trespass offering is to experience Him as the redeeming One, the shining One, and the reigning One in order to enjoy Him as the supply of life in the fellowship of life—1 John 1:1—2:2; Rev. 21:21, 23; 22:1-2:

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life

1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:4 And these things we write that our joy may be made full.

1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;

1 John 2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for those of the whole world.

Rev 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

Rev 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Rev 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

1. In taking Christ as our trespass offering, we need to make a thorough confession of all our sins and impurity to have a good and pure conscience—Acts 24:16; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 9:14; 10:22.

Acts 24:16 Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

1 Tim 1:5 But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of unfeigned faith;

1 Tim 1:19 Holding faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith;

1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

2 Tim 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, while unceasingly I have remembrance concerning you in my petitions night and day,

Heb 9:14 How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Heb 10:22 Let us come forward to the Holy of Holies with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
2. If we confess our sins, God is faithful in His word to forgive us our sins and righteous in His redemption to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; furthermore, Christ as our elder Brother is our Advocate with the Father to restore our interrupted fellowship with the Father that we may abide in the enjoyment of the divine fellowship—1 John 1:7, 9; 2:1-2.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;

1 John 2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for those of the whole world.
3. The cleansing of the blood of Jesus the Son of God solves the problem of separation from God, the problem of guilt in our conscience, and the problem of accusations from Satan, thus enabling us to have a daily life full of God's presence—Psa. 103:1-4, 12-13; 32:1-2; Rev. 12:10-11.

Psa 103:1 Bless Jehovah, O my soul; / And all that is within me, bless His holy name.

Psa 103:2 Bless Jehovah, O my soul; / And do not forget all His benefits:

Psa 103:3 He pardons all your iniquities; / He heals all your diseases;

Psa 103:4 He redeems your life from the pit; / He crowns you with lovingkindness and compassions;

Psa 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, / So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Psa 103:13 As compassionate as a father is toward his children, / So compassionate is Jehovah toward those who fear Him.

Psa 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; / Whose sin is covered.

Psa 32:2 Blessed is the man to whom / Jehovah does not impute iniquity / And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

Rev 12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.
4. Taking Christ as our trespass offering with the confession of our sins in the divine light is the way to drink Christ as the living water for us to become the New Jerusalem—John 4:14-18.

John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water springing up into eternal life.

John 4:15 The woman said to Him, Sir, give me this water so that I will not thirst nor come here to draw.

John 4:16 He said to her, Go, call your husband and come here.

John 4:17 The woman answered and said, I do not have a husband. Jesus said to her, You have well said, I do not have a husband,

John 4:18 For you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.

5. Taking Christ as our trespass offering to receive the forgiveness of sins issues in our fearing God and loving God—Psa. 130:4; Luke 7:47-50.

Psa 130:4 But with You there is forgiveness, / That You would be feared.

Luke 7:47 For this reason I say to you, Her sins which are many are forgiven, because she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, he loves little.

Luke 7:48 And He said to her, Your sins are forgiven.

Luke 7:49 And those who were reclining at table with Him began to say within themselves, Who is this who even forgives sins?

Luke 7:50 But He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.

IV. As we are enjoying Christ in the divine fellowship, we continually experience a cycle in our spiritual life of four crucial things—the eternal life, the fellowship of the eternal life, the divine light, and the blood of Jesus the Son of God; such a cycle brings us onward in the growth of the divine life until we reach the maturity of life to corporately arrive at a fullgrown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ—1 John 1:1-9; Heb. 6:1; Eph. 4:13.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life

1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:4 And these things we write that our joy may be made full.

1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,