

GERMINATION OF THE SEED

Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery fellowship word, 06 March 2022
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Introduction

Hello, everyone. In our last session we considered the final three aspects of the steps of salvation, under the prevenient grace of God. Jesus summarised this prevenient phase of salvation as 'wayside ground'.

In our session today, we will move on from wayside ground and consider the process of *germination*, through which a person who has received the Seed, which is the Spirit of Christ, becomes *born-again*; or is a son of God who has been *born from above*.

The Son is the expression of our sonship

Last week we noted that the Son, who is the Word of God, who became flesh, is the expression and image of every person's sonship.

All that the Father has predestined every son to be, is all in Christ, the Word of God, the Son.

Because the name and expression of every person's sonship is in Christ, He is described as 'the Father's Seed'. He is a 'seed' in the sense of being the Father's Son.

But, from Him, all of the sons of God come forth.

Christ 'breathed on them'; regeneration

When the Spirit of Christ comes into a hearer's heart, He brings the Holy Spirit with Him. He says to those in whom He has come, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' Joh 20:22.

On the day of Jesus' resurrection, He entered the upper room where the disciples were all present, and 'He breathed on them'.

Last week we understood that this is a work of *regeneration*. 'He *breathed* on them, and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit".' Those are two separate actions.

To be born of the Spirit we must relinquish our natural reasoning

We will consider in more detail later in this session that a person can *receive* the Holy Spirit only if they *relinquish* their understanding of who God is and what it means to be a Christian. This is an understanding that is based in a person's *natural sight* and *natural reasoning* capacity.

We are not to be 'born of the flesh'. That is what is natural to our understanding.

We are to be *born of the Spirit*. To be born of the Spirit, we have to relinquish the understanding that is based in our natural reasoning.

That is exactly what Paul said in his letter to the Corinthians. 'For what man knows the things of man except the spirit of the man which is in him?'

Paul explained that our understanding of what it means to be a person is understood by people - and that is a natural understanding.

Paul said that we cannot understand what it means to be born of God through that which is natural.

'Even so no-one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.' 1Co 2:11-12.

This is the amazing promise of becoming a son of God. But we can only know that when we *relinquish* our *own understanding* to receive the understanding that comes from *the Holy Spirit*.

You can see that, when Jesus comes and says, 'Receive the Holy Spirit', He does not overwhelm our will at this point.

When He says, 'Receive the Holy Spirit', we receive the Holy Spirit by letting go of our *own understanding*, to receive the illumination and understanding that comes by the Spirit. We can then know our sonship - or grow and be established as a son of God.

The Holy Spirit births our name and the divine nature in our heart

A hearer's natural 'spirit' is their *identity*.

When the Holy Spirit is *received*, He births, in the hearer's identity, or spirit, the *name and divine nature life* of God, which are in the Seed - Christ, who has *come into* their heart - that entered their heart and are specific to their identity.

Again, when the Holy Spirit is received, He births, in the hearer's spirit, the name and divine nature

life of God, which are in the Seed who entered their heart, and are unique to their identity.

When they receive this name and life, they *possess* the 'treasure' of their sonship as an *inheritance*. It becomes a *possession* for them.

Germination of the seed; a new creation; birth through the word of God

This process is referred to, in the Scriptures, as *germination*, or the *seed taking root*.

It is no longer just a seed in the ground of a person's heart now; it has changed, and it is becoming part of this person. The person is being *re-created*, or becoming a *new creation*, as a result of this process of germination.

The apostle Peter spoke of this in his first letter. 'Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.' 1Pe 1:23. The Greek word used for 'seed' here is *spora* (Strong's number 4701).

There are two elements here. There is a seed that causes *birth*; and it is *through* the Word of God.

The Word of God is a separate element to this seed that is causing birth. This is focal in today's session.

The miracle of new birth

In this statement, the apostle Peter made a notable distinction between the *Word of God*, and the *incorruptible seed* through which a person is *born*.

This distinction reveals how Christ's life, which is from the Father and in the Son, becomes the life of a son of God. This is the miracle of *new birth*.

Two principal seeds – Christ who dwells and the Holy Spirit who gives life

Christ is the Seed of the Father. We have already established that principle.

And the apostle John said, 'Christ, the Seed of the Father, is the Word of God'.

In this passage, Peter described *two seeds*. He described an *incorruptible seed* of which we are born - but it is *through* the Word of God.

And that *Word of God* is a seed as well - Christ, the Seed.

As we will see in the language, it is referring to two different dimensions or expressions of 'seed'.

Christ, the Seed of the Father, is the Word of God, and He *dwells* in the heart of a believer.

And the Holy Spirit is the Seed of the *new birth*, because the Spirit is the One who *gives life*.

We receive the Spirit of Christ into our heart as a Seed of the Father. He comes into our heart, and that is *adoption*.

But there is another 'seed process' by which that Seed who is Christ, *germinates* in our heart, so that the life *that* is in Christ becomes our life and we are *co-heirs* with Christ, as those who are *born* of the Father.

The apostle Peter said that that Word of God who comes into us, the Son, the Seed of the Father, has another seed element to it, called an *incorruptible seed*; by which we are *born* of that life.

We need to understand the distinction between these two seeds. And we need to understand how they 'transact' within our heart, so that we are born of God as a new creation.

The passage in Peter's letter highlights two seeds that are fundamental to the process of new birth. 1Pe 1:23. And this is borne out in the Scriptures.

There are three Greek words for 'seed' that are used in the New Testament. Not all seed is the same when we read 'seed' in the Scriptures. We will look at these three Greek words but, in the end, there are *two* principal types of seed that are important for us in understanding this new birth transaction.

Sperma; a descendant; the one Seed, Christ

We will look at the first of these seeds. 'Now to Abraham and his Seed.' (Strong's number 4690) That is the Greek word *sperma*.

'Now to Abraham and his Seed [*sperma*] were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed [*sperma*]," who is Christ.' Gal 3:16.

In this passage and in many of the passages that use this particular Greek word, *sperma*, it refers to either *the natural or spiritual descendants* of a person.

Jesus, the Son of God, is the Seed, or *sperma*, of the Father. He is the *descendant* of the Father.

In this passage in particular, Paul focused on the point that he was not referring to 'many seeds'.

He was saying, 'There is one Seed, and from that one Seed, Christ, come all the children of Abraham.' And all the children of Abraham are all the sons of God. This is the one Seed. That is the Seed, *sperma*.

Sporos; a seed sown in the ground

A second Greek word for 'seed' is *sporos* (Strong's number 4703). This word applies to a seed being sown in the ground, naturally or spiritually.

So, there is a 'Seed' who is a descendant, who is the Son of God.

Then there is the principle of a seed sown in the ground; that is *sporos*.

It is a seed of wheat; or it can be the word of God that is sown.

'Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.' Luk 8:11. The seed in this parable is *sporos*. It is the one that is sown into the ground.

There is another passage that is helpful in understanding this. 'Now may He who supplies seed [*sporos*] to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed [*sporos*] you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness.' 2Co 9:10.

Sperma speaks about the descendant.

Sporos speaks about the sowing of a seed into the ground.

Spora; seed to natural offspring

The third Greek term for 'seed' is the term *spora*. So there is *sperma*, *sporos* and then *spora* (Strong's number 470).

Spora is used only in one place in the New Testament. 1Pe 1:23. This particular word, *spora*, refers to the process by which the sown seed produces human offspring.

So, how does something go from a seed to producing human offspring? It is the process by which that seed becomes a *fruiting plant*. That is true in relation to a botanical context, like a plant. But he is also saying that it is the process by which seed sown becomes the natural offspring. (Vine's Expository Concordance)

One Son to a multitude of sons

We can think about it this way – there is *sperma*, which is the one Son.

How does that one Son become a multitude of sons? That is *spora*. 'Having been born again, not of corruptible *spora*, but incorruptible, through the word of God [*sperma*]'.

'Having been born again, not of corruptible [*spora*], but incorruptible, through the word of God [*sperma*] which lives and abides forever.'

This is Christ *dwelling* in our heart.

How does Christ go from *coming into* our heart as a Seed, to *dwelling* in our heart, living and abiding forever?

It is by an *incorruptible* seed described as *spora*.

This word and this passage from Peter reveal how the life in the seed becomes a fruiting plant.

The other place where this Greek word is used is in the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament. 2Ki 19:29.

It refers to sowing and reaping. Sowing produces multiplied seed, which can be reaped. One seed produces bountiful fruit that can be collected. This highlights the *multiplication of the life*.

The multiplication of life

So, in one seed, or descendant *sperma*, there is the potential for a multitude.

The question is, how does that potential within it multiply to many sons?

This is what we are understanding *spora* to be.

It is a transition, so that there is a multiplication of life, whereby the seed-life of Christ – the Seed of the Father – becomes the life of a person who receives it.

This is the great, amazing miracle of new birth – it transforms their *identity* as a son of man, so that they become a *son of God*, born of *the life* that is in the Seed.

The Holy Spirit gives life to us

That is the gospel, right there. This transforming work is *by the Holy Spirit*. We know that because it is the Spirit who *gives life*.

Think about it this way: 'the life is in the Son' – so, if it is to become our life, how does it get from the Son into us? It is because He says to us, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'

The Holy Spirit is the One who *gives the life* to us. He is the One who *causes this transaction to happen*.

Jesus spoke to His disciples. 'It is the Spirit [the Holy Spirit] who gives life; the flesh profits nothing'. Joh 6:63.

This was our very first point today. You cannot move past prevenient grace if you do not relinquish the understanding that belongs to the flesh. It will profit you nothing. We have to let go the sight of our own eyes and the understanding of our own heart, because it is *the Spirit who gives the life*.

We have to *receive* the Holy Spirit.

'It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and life.'

A word has been proclaimed – the *word* of God – by which the Spirit of God *comes into a heart*.

However, we have to *receive* the Holy Spirit so that the *life and Spirit in that word* become the life and Spirit of us as sons of God.

The Holy Spirit is the life of God that causes an identity to be *re-created* in the likeness of the Son.

The work of the Holy Spirit in re-creation; new birth

I began by making the point that the Son, who is the *Word* of God, is the *expression and image* of every person's sonship.

When you receive that life that is unique to your name and to your identity, you are then being re-created as a son of God; but in the image and likeness of Christ the Son.

The Holy Spirit is the *life* of God that causes an identity to be re-created in the likeness of the Son, who is the express image of the Father.

The Spirit takes the sonship name and life of the believer, which are *from* the Father and in the Son, which are *in you* because Christ has come into your heart, and causes you to become a new creation, through birth.

Jesus described this work of the Holy Spirit. He was referring to the Holy Spirit in this passage. 'He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify Me.'

The *glorification* of something is the *expression* of that person.

The Holy Spirit *expresses the Son* to us, or glorifies Him, by doing - what? 'By taking what is Mine and declaring it [or making it known] to you.'

We are sanctified by the Spirit

Jesus said, 'All that belongs to the Father is now in Me.'

We spent time in our last session in understanding the offering of Yahweh that brought to birth this Seed, the Son of God.

'He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.' Joh 16:14-15.

So, *the Holy Spirit* takes what is 'of Christ' – which is the name and life of every son, from the Father – and He makes it specifically known to each unique identity.

That is why the Holy Spirit is called 'the Spirit of sanctification', who sanctifies us. He is taking *all* of those names and is making that life and expression unique to our identity.

Living by the faith of the Son of God

Through birth *by the Spirit*, Christ becomes our *life*, and we are able to live this life *by the faith* of the Son of God.

This is a person in whom the seed has germinated, and they have become *a son* of God the Father, *born of His life* from the Son, which is *made known* to them by the Holy Spirit.

This is a whole order of life to which we are joined, through *birth*.

Christ comes, through adoption, crying 'Abba, Father' within us

Now, because Christ has become the life of a believer, by the Holy Spirit, the believer himself begins to cry out, 'Abba, Father.' That joyful expression, 'Abba, Father', is the evidence that a person has been *born of God*.

God has become their Father, and they are acknowledging that birth through the cry, 'Abba, Father'. Rom 8:15.

In our last session, we spoke about *adoption*.

As Christ *comes into* the heart of a believer, it is Christ, under the adoption, who is crying, 'Abba, Father'.

The believer in whom the Spirit of the Son has been received, under the adoption, is not crying out. The Spirit of Christ cries out, 'Abba, Father', within them.

He is expressing their name, which *will become* the expression of their name when they are *born* of that word.

Possessing the treasure of our sonship; born of God

When a believer begins to cry, 'Abba, Father', it reveals they have been born of God, because the life of God the Son who is crying out, 'Abba, Father', has become their *life* and is now their *expression*.

I love that point. He is coming in *adoption*, proclaiming their name to them, so that they can live by faith.

But when the transaction happens, that which the Son comes in proclaiming as adoption to them has become *their possession*.

They had the 'right' to it in the adoption. Once the transaction happens, they actually *have* the treasure of their inheritance as a son of God.

What Jesus is coming to proclaim to you is *now the expression of your life as a son of God*, through the works that you are doing to *glorify* God the Father.

A believer's cry of 'Abba, Father' reveals that they have been *born of God*, because the life of the Son has *germinated* within them *by* the Holy Spirit.

The *word* of the Son, 'Abba, Father', has now become the word in their mouth, as they call upon God, who is their Father.

They have received the inheritance of the divine nature that is promised to them in the adoption.

The joy of salvation

The evidence of this germination is the *joy of salvation*. Jesus explained this when He spoke about the transition from wayside ground to stony ground. Mat 13:20.

The first 'mark' of this germination is 'for joy' - that is an *expression*. This is the evidence of this new birth transaction having taken place.

The firstfruits of our eternal inheritance

Paul described the seed of the divine nature as the *firstfruits*, or earnest, of a believer's eternal inheritance as a son of God.

This is such a beautiful point. When we *receive* the Holy Spirit - this is *the incorruptible seed* by which we are born of God - that is described as an

earnest, or down-payment, or a little bit 'in lieu', of the whole of our eternal inheritance.

This means that we are touching or obtaining eternal life, while in a mortal body. It is great security for us all, knowing that this mortal body is going to perish. We *already* have our eternal life through new birth!

Paul said that it is a firstfruits, or earnest, of the eternal inheritance. Rom 8:23.

Believing the promise of sonship; receiving the Holy Spirit; germination

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he elaborated this particular point. This is amazing as a synthesis of what I have been trying to say in this study so far.

He said, 'Having *believed*.' So, in order to *believe* something, we have to *hear* something. We have to receive a message, and we will either believe it or we will not.

'Having believed [the Word of God, who is Christ].'

This is *the Spirit of the Son* coming into our heart.

'You were *sealed* with the Holy Spirit of promise.' The Seed, Christ, comes into our heart, and He says, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'

If we have *believed* that message, which means that we have to give up our own understanding to receive the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit *seals* us. He *marks* us as a son of God. That mark is the *germination* process.

'Having believed the word of God, who is Christ, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.' The promise is the promise of sonship, promised to Abraham.

'Who is the guarantee.' That word 'guarantee' means 'earnest', or 'down-payment'.

'Of our inheritance.' That is an eternal inheritance for the new heavens and earth. He is 'the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory'. Eph 1:13-14.

We have eternal life as a precious possession

Paul was that saying we *have* the down-payment of an eternal inheritance *until* we receive a resurrection body. That is what it means to be a son of God *now*.

We have that eternal life as a precious possession as long as we are *found in Christ*. We will speak more about this in the coming weeks.

The germination of His life in us by the Holy Spirit; the temple of the Holy Spirit

The point is that we receive that life as a possession by receiving the Holy Spirit, who *germinates* that life in us.

The germination of that life, by which He takes the life in the Seed, from the Son, and then, by the seed-principle, makes it our life, is the down-payment, or assurance, that we will have eternal life in the *resurrection*.

Once a believer has been *born* of God, their body becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit. 1Co 6:19.

We have received the Holy Spirit, as Jesus said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' We have Him, the Person, the Holy Spirit, dwelling in our heart.

Jesus said, 'He will dwell in you and be with you forever.'

Our body now has become a temple, or a residence, of the Holy Spirit, who enables *offering* work in us.

Once He is inside us, dwelling in our heart, He *bears witness* with our spirit that we are a son of God and an heir of God.

It is not only that we are *born*. It is, further, that, as long as we *walk in the truth*, He is convincing us and affirming to us *our sonship*.

The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit

If we deviate, and say, 'No, I am going to walk according to the sight of my own eyes', He cannot assure our sonship.

In fact, He will burn against that, in order to join you to the offering that will deliver you from that desire to name yourself. He is absolutely *for* your sanctification.

He is *in* you, affirming to you that you are a son and an heir of God – on one condition: that you *suffer with Christ*. Rom 8:16-17.

The Holy Spirit within you is bearing witness with your spirit that you are a son of God, as long as you are suffering with Christ. In other words, as long as you are *conformed to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings*.

That is how we are being delivered from the propensity to deviate, through our own law.

The Father is glorified by our obedient sonship

'Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and *you are not your own*?' 1Co 6:19.

When you receive the Holy Spirit, you no longer are the one who is in control of your life.

'For you were bought with a price.' 1Co 6:20. This precious purchase price was the shedding of Christ's blood.

'Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, *which are God's*.' 1Co 6:20.

We have been redeemed to the Father through the offering of the Son. We have the Holy Spirit within us.

So, what you do with your body will either be the expression of yourself; or it will be the expression of your sonship, which is glorifying God.

He is revealed as your Father as you do the works of your sonship *in obedience* to Him. This requires your participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, where the blood, which is the redeeming agent, is operative in your life.

The Spirit does not only *birth* you; He also *joins* you to that offering reality, so that what you do in your body are the works of your sonship by which the Father is being glorified.

'The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God [or sons of God], and if children [if sons], then heirs [you are an heir]'. Rom 8:16-17.

Everything that belongs to Jesus, as the Son of God, belongs to you - an heir also.

'Heirs of God [the Father] and joint heirs with Christ, *if indeed we suffer with Him*, that we may also be glorified together [with Him]'. Rom 8:17.

These are the 'new birth' conditions. These are the parameters or foundation upon which we continue to grow and mature, and walk as a son of God.

The Holy Spirit and the sons of God are both likened by the Lord to 'the stars of heaven'

As a temple for the Holy Spirit, the body of a son of God is also *the expression of the Holy Spirit*.

It is not only that the Spirit is in us now; it is that, because *He is in us*, what we do in our bodies will *reveal* the Holy Spirit.

Have you ever considered your way, asking yourself, 'Am I revealing the Holy Spirit through my conduct?' As a temple for the Holy Spirit, the body of a son of God is also the expression of the Holy Spirit.

We note that, in the same way that the Holy Spirit is symbolised in the Scriptures as 'the stars of heaven', the sons of God are also likened by the Lord to 'the stars of heaven'.

In the symbology of the Scriptures, the sun symbolises the Father; the moon symbolises the Son of God; and the stars symbolise the Holy Spirit.

And the beautiful and amazing integration and tapestry of the Scriptures is that, in the same way that the Holy Spirit is symbolised by the stars of heaven, we, as sons of God, are also represented, or symbolised, by the stars of heaven, *because we have the Holy Spirit within us!*

And He is seen by what we do in our bodies.

' "Look now toward heaven [the Lord speaking to Abraham], and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants [children, or sons] be".' Gen 15:5.

These are the sons of Abraham, who become the sons of God through new birth, and they 'look like' shining lights in the heavens.

We note, also, that Paul, describing the glory of the resurrection bodies of the sons of God, said, 'There is one glory of the sun [referring to the Father], another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.' 1Co 15:41.

Do you see that the Holy Spirit expresses the name of every son of God; but that every name of every son of God is unique.

That is why the glory that is expressed by each son is unique - and is possible only *by the Holy Spirit*.

The Everlasting Covenant desire of God – the children of God fellowship with Yahweh forever

That 'new birth' transaction is the great mystery and miracle of the Scriptures. We have come to that; it is what we are to obtain.

The Everlasting Covenant desire of God is that we would become the children of God and have fellowship with Yahweh forever.

'Wayside ground' is the entire prevenient grace phase

Why would a person not want such an amazing provision?

This is where we have to understand the parable of the sower and seed, and what Jesus said about wayside ground, because we have learned that wayside ground is the entire phase of prevenient grace.

However, it is possible to live and remain in that, and not go on to obtain the sonship that the Father predestined for us, even before They created the heavens and the earth.

Obtaining understanding is the crisis of wayside ground

A person fails to proceed beyond wayside ground to new birth when, at some point, they *resist the grace of God* through which they can be delivered from their own understanding of themselves; their understanding of God; and their understanding of the gospel.

When we resist the grace of God, we can become 'stuck' on wayside ground. This is because we hold on to *our own understanding* - of ourselves, of God, or of the gospel.

Obtaining understanding is the crisis of wayside ground.

The point of transition, from wayside to the grounds where there is a fruiting plant, hinges on this issue of 'understanding'.

The outcome of failing to obtain understanding is that 'the birds of the air', which refers to the spiritual host of wickedness under the rulership of Satan, steal away the seed of a person's sonship.

This is because they do not obtain understanding which comes from the Spirit.

In this regard, Jesus said, 'Therefore hear the parable of the sower: "When anyone hears the

word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart”.’ Mat 13:18-19.

Do you see the point that the Spirit of Christ, which is the Seed of God, which is the Word of God, was literally in the heart? It came in; but it did not germinate, because they did not receive understanding.

It is very important that we recognise that there is a difference between the understanding that comes by *receiving the Holy Spirit*, and our own ability to reason the Scriptures.

If we approach the Scriptures purely from an intellectual, natural capacity, we may ‘know a lot of stuff’ - yet never be born again. This is why it is so important to recognise what ‘understanding’ is.

God’s grace is not irresistible – do not harden your heart

‘When anyone ... does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.’ Mat 13:19.

The wicked one snatches away the seed that is sown in a hearer’s heart because they ‘harden their heart’ in relation to one or more of the steps of this wayside, or preventive grace, phase of salvation. Heb 3:8.

We took a number of weeks to consider ten steps - all of which are related to preventive grace. Now, no-one is ‘born’ through all those steps, although they are all foundational to birth, and then to growing up as a son of God.

Let us, then, appreciate how miraculous and amazing preventive grace is, all the way to actually receiving the Spirit of Christ in our heart, and having our identity, or spirit, made alive through *regeneration*.

However, at some point in one of those ten steps, a person can harden their heart. It might be around the issue of friendship, the issue of the fear of the Lord, the issue of idolatry.

Whatever it is, wherever there is a ‘hardening’, or resisting, of the grace of God – and God’s grace is not irresistible - He gives us the complete dignity of *choice* at that point.

When a person hardens their heart, they are vulnerable to Satan coming and taking that seed.

The wicked one snatches away the seed that is sown in the heart, because they harden their heart - it becomes ‘compact’ - in relation to one or more of the steps in this phase of salvation.

Thinking back over the steps that belong to this preventive phase of wayside ground, for example, they may hold on to former gospel traditions; they may fail to receive the fear of the Lord.

They may reject the invitation to present themselves for offering, which simply means their participation in the *agape* meal on the ground of the presbytery, saying, ‘No, I am not joining that. I have my own meal, thanks very much!’

Or they may resist Christ Himself when He comes to speak to them.

However, the primary issue is that, when He says, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit,’ they will *not let go of their own understanding* at that point - *their understanding* of what this new birth means for them.

The seed of sonship stolen from a person’s heart – adoption is lost

Here is a very important point. When Satan does steal away the seed of sonship from a person’s heart, they do not even have adoption anymore.

A person cannot simply remain in adoption and think that that ‘will do’ for them.

Under the Old Covenant, the people received the word as a seed, and it could not germinate because Christ had not yet ascended to the throne to give the Holy Spirit. So, they *had* adoption.

However, in the New Covenant, when Jesus, the Seed of Christ, comes in, bringing adoption, if a person will not move from wayside ground to new birth, the seed is taken from their heart, and they do not even have adoption.

It merely becomes a form of religion, even if they remain in a church. It becomes a form of religion that denies any power.

And that power, of course, is *the power of resurrection life*, which is found only in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings, to those who are born of God and are baptised into that offering.

So, when the seed of sonship is stolen from a person’s heart, they do not even have adoption.

The prevenient grace of God no longer avails for them. He 'shuts it down'.

They are now completely vulnerable to the principalities and powers of the air. However, it is not only for that moment when the birds come to take away the seed. Their whole life then is subject to the spirit of this world.

Do not receive the grace of God in vain

Paul wrote, 'Do not receive God's grace in vain.' 2Co 6:1.

God's grace comes so that it would lead to birth but, when one hardens their heart, it does not transact, or germinate, to a 'plant', which is symbolic of *new creation*.

'We then, as workers together with Him [Christ].' 2Co 6:1. Those 'workers together' are the messengers of Christ, who are in His right hand, proclaiming the word of the gospel; the gospel of sonship.

'We then, as workers together with Him [coming in the spirit and power of Elijah] also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.' 2Co 6:1.

Paul said, in effect, 'There is grace coming with this word so that you can become a son and grow up and mature as a son.'

'We then, as workers together with Him, also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.'

'Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart'

'For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation".' 2Co 6:2.

We see that 'in the acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you' is the word of God coming into a person, and they are receiving the Holy Spirit.

And that happens on a day, or in a season, called 'today'.

When you hear the word that has been proclaimed 'today', it is *now* 'the accepted time of your birth', and *now* 'the day of your salvation'.

The day of salvation is *now*, because a hearer receives and responds to the ministry of the Holy

Spirit, who says, 'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.' Heb 3:7-8. This refers specifically to what happens on wayside ground.

'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.' The prevenient grace of God accompanies this word so that we can *choose* to enter the kingdom of God as those who are 'born of water and the Spirit'. Joh 3:5.

'Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says'. Heb 3:7. Do you see the point? You have received the Spirit in you, and the Spirit is saying, '*Today* is the day of your salvation.'

Deliverance in the day of trial

'Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness".' Heb 3:7-8.

This 'wilderness' will be 'the day of trial'; it is that crisis of *connection* to the offering of Christ, as He comes alongside a person.

This is where we will be connected to Him to be delivered from everything that prevents us from receiving this 'so great salvation' and entering into rest. There has to be *deliverance* there.

It is a crisis; it is 'today'. 'Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness.'

So, another way of saying 'today' is, 'the day of trial in the wilderness'. For the apostle Peter, this trial was in the house of Caiaphas.

'Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, "They always go astray in their heart".' Heb 3:9-10.

In the day of trial, they were not delivered from their iniquity. 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' Heb 3:10.

It is because we do not relinquish our own understanding, which is based in our other law, which is iniquity, idolatry, that we can never know His ways.

Entering His rest – the inheritance that belongs to sonship

'Knowing His ways' is the way of walking according to the Spirit, isn't it? If we do not walk according to the Spirit, how are we walking?

We are walking according to the flesh!

‘They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.’

And so, what did He do? He said, ‘I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest”.’ Heb 3:11. That is the *inheritance* that belongs to *sonship*.

Adoption to new birth

Significantly, many people confuse new birth with the deliverance and grace that they experienced when they first heard the gospel. And, as we have understood, that prevenient grace phase is amazing; it is miraculous.

However, we must not confuse that wonderful mercy and grace that comes to us in the prevenient grace phase, with the new birth, where we *obtain* our inheritance.

We receive the ‘right’ to the inheritance in the adoption, under prevenient grace; but it is not ours until it is *transacted* in us.

Progressing from wayside ground

Many people confuse new birth with the deliverance and grace that they experienced when they first heard the gospel. As a result, they may have yet to progress from wayside ground. And they are at risk of failing to enter Christ’s rest.

They are walking only according to their own understanding of the gospel and of God’s call on their life.

What is the mark of someone who is not progressing from wayside ground?

A key indicator of a person’s failure to proceed beyond the prevenient grace of wayside ground is that they can become beset by fear and angst, particularly in relation to matters to do with the church and the body of Christ; and their participation in it.

They are not demonstrating life and peace. Instead, their life is full of fear, angst and disappointment.

They may be looking at their life and thinking, ‘This is not what I expected the Christian life to avail for me.’ There is disappointment or depression in relation to their Christian experience.

Some even begin to express anger at God, based on their perception of the failure of the gospel.

Do you see that, where these emotions are being manifest, this is the evidence that these ones are seeing the outcome of the gospel from *their own understanding*?

They have not obtained the understanding that belongs to the Spirit because, if they did, they would know and understand how to participate in Christ’s offering and sufferings where, in that fellowship, we obtain the life that belongs to a son of God.

The seed-germination process requires receiving the word from a presbytery

‘Germination’ requires us to receive understanding through a word from outside of ourselves.

If we cannot receive a messenger or a word from outside of ourself, that seed-germination process will not happen, because that word that is coming is proclaimed *by the Holy Spirit*, sent down from heaven. 1Pe 1:23-25.

It is not merely the fact that you will not receive the word of a person. It is because *the Holy Spirit* has anointed that person who is proclaiming that message to you. If you cannot receive that, the germination process will not happen.

Germination requires us to receive understanding through a word from outside of ourselves. As we hear this word, ministered by the Spirit, we begin to see the treasure of our calling as a son of God.

We find the treasure of our sonship in the ground of the fellowship of the word

What did Jesus say in His parable about a person who sees the treasure of sonship? Where do they find it? They find that it is *buried in a field*. Mat 13:44.

It is buried in a ‘ground’. And that is *the ground of fellowship* that is established through the proclamation of the word.

That is fellowship with the presbytery, which is ‘fellowship with the Father and His Son’. 1Jn 1:3. That is where your treasure is found.

Relinquishing your own understanding means that you can, in one Spirit, join that fellowship.

As we hear the word ministered by the Spirit, we begin to see that the treasure of our calling as a son of God is buried in the ground of fellowship with the presbytery, which is ‘fellowship with the

Father and His Son'. 1Jn 1:3. That is beautiful, isn't it?

That our joy may be full – sell all; that is, our own understanding

The apostle John continued, '[I am proclaiming this to you so] that *your joy may be full.*' 1Jn 1:4.

The joy that you first obtained through germination will grow up to its fullness as you are established in that fellowship.

To obtain this treasure, a person must 'sell all that they have to buy the field', as Jesus proclaimed. Mat 13:44.

And what do we have to sell? What do you and I have to sell? What do we value most and fight for the most?

Our most prized article is *our own understanding*, isn't it?

It is our own interpretation or our belief in our own right to interpret what something means for us or does not mean for us. That is what we have to sell.

'Beating away the birds of the air' that endeavour to rob us

Then, as we are selling that, and are presenting ourselves for fellowship on this ground of the presbytery, we diligently have to apply ourselves to 'beating away the birds of the air'. Mat 13:4.

It is not simply that some become vulnerable to 'birds' and others do not. *Everyone*, at this point of decision, which actually happens at a crisis point – and Peter is the classic example – actually has to beat away the birds at this point. The birds come to take away our sonship.

God dignifies us with that initiative, and we beat away those birds because we believe that the treasure is in that field; it is in that fellowship with Christ and with His brethren.

We diligently apply ourselves to beating away the birds of the air that endeavour to rob us of the inheritance.

The birds of the air can rob us of our inheritance by 'plucking out' that seed; and the 'plucking out' is by offering an alternative word.

However, importantly, we can *let go* of our inheritance. It is not only that birds dig around in the 'ground' of our heart to find the treasure of

our inheritance; we can actually 'give it up' because we entertain and avail ourselves of alternative gospels that are being communicated to us.

'Beating off the birds' is actually beating off the words that are other than the word of faith which says, 'Come'.

Through patient endurance, we are to diligently apply ourselves to beating away the birds of the air that endeavour to rob us of our inheritance by offering us alternatives to obtaining life of God.

Set upon a rock – joined to the fellowship of Christ as a new creation

King David testified that the Lord answered him when he sought the Lord in this manner. *Everyone* has to do this!

'I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit.' Psa 40:1-2.

'The horrible pit' is when we recognise the depths of our iniquity at that crisis of decision as Christ comes alongside us, as He did with Peter.

A believer is brought up out of 'the darkness of the pit' when they are *joined to the offering of Christ*.

King David wrote, 'I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and *set my feet upon a rock* [What else did He do?], and *established my steps*'. Psa 40:1-2.

As a son of God is born, they are *set in new creation with Christ*. They can walk in 'a new and living way'!

A believer is brought up out of the darkness of the pit when they are joined to the offering of Christ, which He revealed when He was established by the Father on the 'ground' of new creation.

After He cried out, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?', His heart was broken. The Father reached down and lifted Him up out of the waters of judgement, and set Him on the ground of new creation. Mat 27:46. Psa 18:4-19.

When we are joined to that point where we are delivered from our own understanding, which is 'taking us away', and it is circumcised from us, we are set on that same rock, with Christ, as a new creation.

That is where *new birth* brings us. Our feet are *set upon a rock*, which is *the fellowship of Christ*.

And our steps are *established* as we walk in the light of the word that proceeds from a lamp presbytery.

The ministry of the word establishes our steps

Let us consider this point: 'You set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.' Then we read from the psalmist, 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path'. Psa 119:105.

If we are to have our steps established, they will be established because we are *walking in the light of the word*. And that 'light of the word' comes from Christ, through a lamp presbytery.

The effect of the ministry of the word is that the hearer is delivered from walking according to the sight of their own eyes; and they are free to receive the word, which becomes the expression of their life.

A new song – the expression of the Holy Spirit in our heart; born of God

Then David testified, after he waited patiently for the Lord, was brought up out of the horrible pit, set upon the rock, and had his feet established, 'He has put a new song in my mouth.' Psa 40:3.

The 'new song' is *the expression of the Holy Spirit* in your heart.

And it is now *the expression of your name* as a son of God, that is *unique to your identity* in that body of which you have become a part.

'He has put a new song in my mouth - praise to our God; many will *see* it and fear, and will trust in the Lord.' Psa 40:3.

This describes the joy of a person who has received the treasures of darkness that are hidden in the field, which they have sold all to obtain.

As the Lord promised, 'I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the Lord, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel.' Isa 45:3.

I think that is a wonderful place to leave it for today. We will continue to understand how we grow, now, as those for whom *the seed of sonship* has *germinated* within our hearts, and *we have been born of God*.