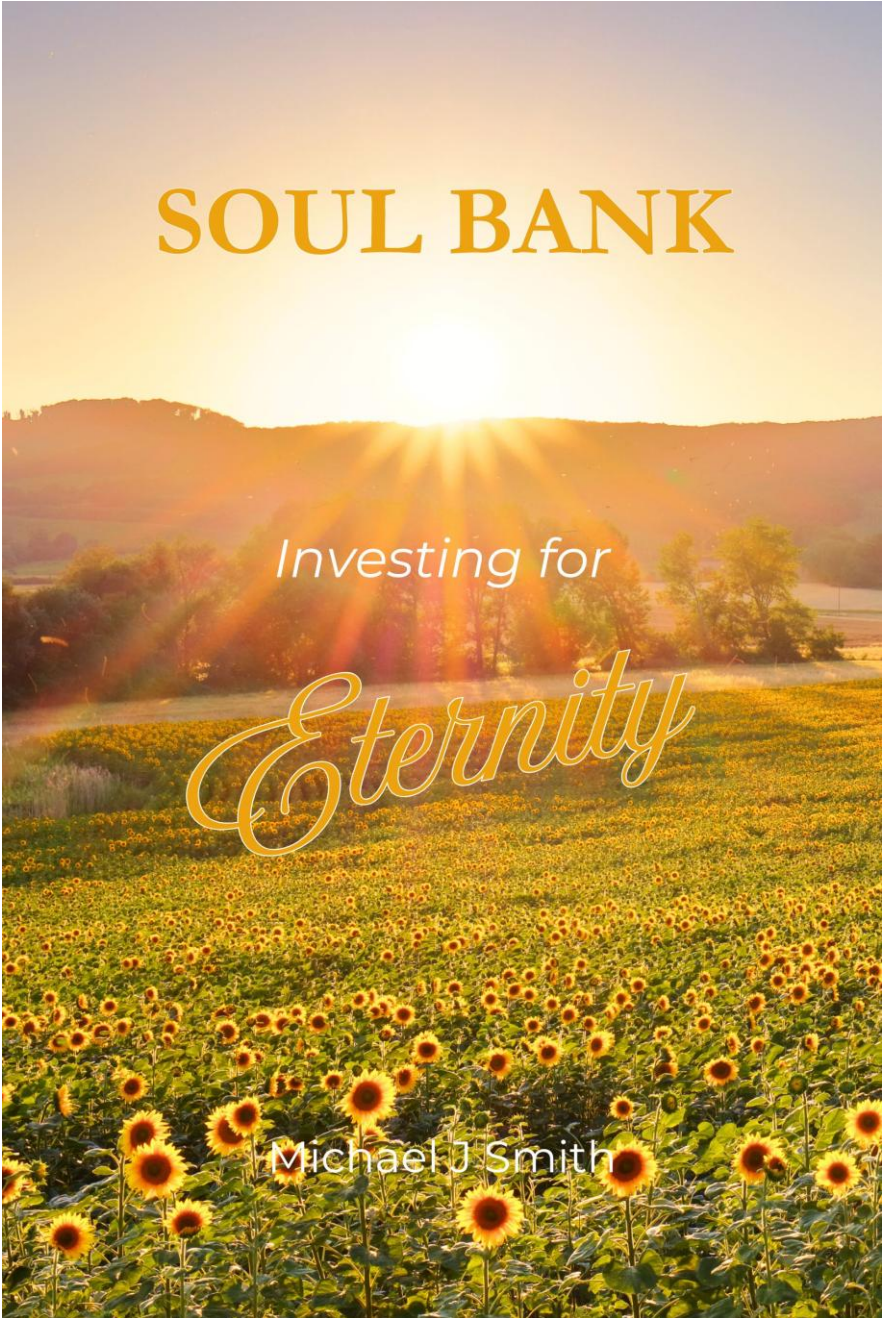


The background of the cover is a photograph of a vast field of sunflowers in the foreground, with a line of trees and rolling hills in the distance. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and long, soft rays of light that filter through the trees.

SOUL BANK

Investing for

Eternity

Michael J Smith

SOUL BANK

Investing for Eternity

Are You Investing for Eternity?

Michael J. Smith

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my Heavenly Father for revealing His love for humanity.

To Jesus, for dying for humanity.

And to the Holy Spirit, for bringing life to humanity.

I dedicate this book to humanity, that you may find that love and life in God.

“And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”

— 1 Corinthians 1:30

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Introduction

Ultimately, this book is a call back to God. A call back to truth. A call back to life. A call back to the prospering of the soul.

My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will minister to you through these pages and help you see how the thief may be stealing from humanity, from your loved ones, and perhaps even from your own life.

But more importantly, how you can find the eternal love, life, light, and truth of God!

You only have one life. May you invest it for eternity.

1. The Great Garden and the Great Fall

Creation reflected not only God's power, but also His desire to dwell with man on earth. Can you imagine the pristine beauty? There are places on earth still today that take our breath away and leave us in awe. Now imagine creation as it was thousands of years ago — untouched, undefiled, pure in beauty. It would truly have been overwhelmingly beautiful and awe-inspiring.

But still, there was one ultra-special place: the Garden of Eden.

Not only because of its beauty and speechless wonder — rivers flowing, vibrant flowers of many colours, trees filled with fruit — but because of the presence of God. People say a picture tells a thousand words, but no words could truly describe the oasis of the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were created by God to be united as one flesh, spiritually one.

“Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” — Genesis 2:7

God breathed His life into them and they became spiritual beings, created in God's image. Adam and Eve were placed there to tend and look after the garden — God's creation. They were the caretakers, if you like. They were pure, holy, and in communion with God, naked and unashamed.

Can we stop for a moment and imagine what life would have been like for Adam and Eve?

Dwelling in the most beautiful of places. Dwelling and communing with God in holiness. Living in the fullness of life, love, light, peace, and goodness. But more than that, they were dwelling with God, and God was dwelling with them. They had communion and relationship with Him. God was not distant from His creation. He came to dwell with them, enjoy His creation, and commune with man.

Until...

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

*He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. **Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew***

that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" **The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."** Genesis 3:1–13*

Their eyes were opened, and they realised they were naked. For me, this is one of the saddest things ever written — one of the saddest moments in human history. They were now awakened to the knowledge of good and evil. Their conscience was awakened. They had disobeyed God. They were naked sin and shame entered the garden of mankind.

They realised they had done something wrong, and they now carried a guilty conscience. Then they heard the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid themselves from God. They ran from God.

Why did they hide from God? Why did they run? They knew they were naked.

Because God is holy — spiritually pure, clean, sinless, and perfect — and so was His Garden of Eden. Sadly, sin could not remain in God's perfect creation or continue in communion with God. This is the moment of separation — not only for Adam and Eve, but for all mankind from communion with God.

Man was thrust out of the Garden, out of the creation and communion he was created to enjoy. This is the great separation between mankind and God. Mankind submitted to the devil and now came under his dominion. God then pronounces curses upon the serpent, the devil, upon Eve, and upon Adam.

Can you imagine how heartbreaking that day would have been?

Separation from God.

God's desire for mankind was loving relationship and communion with Him — not rebellion, separation, and exclusion from the garden He had created for them to dwell in with Him. Father God must have been heart broken that day and everyday people are separated from Him and His love.

2. The Great Robbery of the Soul

This is one of the most prominent moments in history over the last few centuries, when man's intellect was awakened through many theories in various forms. These theories redirected the minds of mankind away from God. Our minds were filled, but our hearts were emptied. Humanity exchanged the truth for a lie, and we are still living with the effects today.

Intellect increased; so did man's pride.

*“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, **because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.**” — Romans 1:24-25*

The devil and Satan want you to make the exchange.

The Great Robbery — How theories robbed humanity

“And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.” — Revelation 12:9

The devil's mission is to deceive the whole world. So, they do not to believe in God? If you wanted to deceive the whole world to not to believe in God, what would you do?

Distract their hearts and divert their minds to turn from Truth – the truth of God.

I think we can see the progression from:

Secular Humanism — Acknowledging God, but believing we can do it without Him. **Materialism** — The material world is what is real and what we need. God doesn't exist.

Relativism / Postmodernism — Robbing humanity of the belief that there is absolute meaning or Divine morality. It's what you make it. Make your own truth and morals. God can't tell us what to believe or how to behave.

Darwinism — There is no Divine Creator God; you are a random, meaningless creation. You make your own identity and purpose.

Transhumanism — Technology is our saviour; let it think for us. We can become our own saviours through technology, solve all problems, and create a

digitalised soul — being reprogrammed by technology in how to think and behave. We have become slaves to technology, and it has become the master.

To exchange the truth for a lie.

To believe in, worship, trust, and love everything else but God. The devil wants you focused on yourself — as though you are the source of your own life, hope, determination, and possibility. He wants you to become an island, separated from the life and truth of God.

The Great Exchange — What Humanity Exchanged

Across history, humanity has continually been offered promises of wisdom, freedom, progress, knowledge, enlightenment, power, identity, and purpose apart from God. Yet beneath these promises was a great exchange.

We exchanged:

God's truth for human reasoning

Relationship with God for religion and systems

Dependence on God for dependence on self

Divine revelation for human intellect

Eternal purpose for temporary gain

Identity in God for identity in self

Absolute truth for subjective truth

The Creator for creation

Spiritual life for materialism

Peace for pride

Faith for scepticism

Worship of God for worship of humanity

Living truth for personal truth

The pursuit of God for the pursuit of self

Humanity believed the ancient lie from the garden:

“You will be like God.”

The further humanity moved away from God, belief in God the more disconnected, darkened, addicted, confused, anxious, divided, empty, and spiritually bankrupt we became. What was exchanged was not merely philosophy or ideas, but life itself.

Simply put the devil lied to us and ribbed us of life in God.

The Great Disconnection — Separation from God

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

— Isaiah 53:6

One of the saddest parts of humanity’s journey over the centuries is that we have grown distant and cold towards God and each other. A spiritual winter has set in, and we are feeling its chilling effects. We once connected with God, revered God, worshipped God, served God, and loved God. Now, many barely know God — or even ourselves.

We have become like distant islands, occasionally passing by one another but rarely truly connecting. The soul is longing for more. Starving for more. More connection — predominantly with God, life meaning, truth and with each other.

The Enlightenment brought illumination to the human mind, but humanity began to follow a false light and a false hope that left people stumbling in the dark. Our minds became intellectually illuminated, but our souls grew dark and distant from God.

We lost sight of the Divine.

Humanity lost sight of hope. Humanity became lost. We lost connection with God — the Divine. We lost connection with each other. And sadly, we even lost connection with ourselves.

Loneliness is now one of the world’s most crippling realities, and its devastating effects are impacting millions, if not billions, of people across the planet today. Information increased. Development increased. Self-increased. God decreased. Connection decreased. We decreased. Now we are more technologically connected than ever before, yet our souls are disconnected from what we need most — God and each other.

The Great Disconnection

The Great Disconnection is mankind’s attempt to find itself apart from God, yet in doing so, humanity has sadly lost the soul of humanity itself. This is the Great Disconnection — separation from God, the source of all life, love, light, and truth. This has led to a great depression.

The Greatest Theft — Love

The greatest theft is love.

The devil is stealing love from humanity.

Foremost, he seeks to steal the truth of God's love for us and sever our love and connection with God by turning our hearts against Him, closing our hearts to Him, and causing people to doubt God and His love. He also seeks to steal love from our relationships with others. Through hurt, offence, betrayal, unforgiveness, fear, and self-protection, many hearts become hardened and closed off.

Relational conflict is one of the devil's great strategies to separate and isolate humanity:

from God

from each other

When we become isolated, unloved, wounded, and disconnected, we become vulnerable. Like a plant without water, the soul without love begins to wither. It becomes dry, barren, wounded, and starved of what it needs to flourish and darkness sets in.

So it is with the soul without the light of love- the love of God.

Relational Conflict — The Battlefield of the Heart

The Great Strategy — How the thief steals

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. "

— *Ephesians 6:11*

The Spiritual Reality

As mentioned before, the spiritual world is real. The devil is real. Evil spirits are real. The pursuit is real. But to know it is real is one thing; to know how it operates is another.

How does the devil seek to steal, kill, and destroy?

By attacking us spiritually through oppression, mentally through negative thoughts, physically through sickness, illness, and accidents, and emotionally by seeking to rob us of our hope and peace.

Two Main Strategies

1.To Attack You

To:

oppress you

judge and condemn you

control you
steal your life
steal your peace
steal your health
steal your relationships
steal your finances
steal your career
steal your hope and freedom

2. To Use You to Attack Others

To manipulate and deceive you into attacking others.

To stir:

anger
bitterness
hatred
unforgiveness
jealousy
division
revenge
conflict

so that you become an instrument of destruction toward others:

stealing from others
hurting others
destroying relationships
damaging people through words and actions and the devils cycle continues.

Voices and Thoughts

Thoughts, Lies, and Deception

KEY: If you have continual negative thoughts, they are often planted by evil spirits. These thoughts and voices seek to manipulate, intimidate, and influence you into action. These are often negative and tormenting voices and thoughts that we don't have control over.

Accusing and Attacking You

(Internalised — inner destruction)

Main purpose:

guilt

shame

condemnation

negative thoughts

self-destruction

destructive coping mechanisms

Lies accusations and deception:

“God hates you.”

“Look at what you’ve done.”

“You’ve made a mess of your life. There’s no hope for you.”

“God couldn’t love you now.”

“God is an illusion.”

“You are on your own.”

“Believe what you can see.”

“You’re going to hell anyway. You may as well live it up now.”

“You’re worthless.”

“They are better off without you.”

“Look what you did.”

“You should be ashamed of yourself.”

“I wouldn’t show my face if I were you.”

Russell Brand once said:

“The voice in my head said I was worthless, ugly, pathetic.”

Accusing Others to You

(Externalised — acting out)

Main purpose:

stirring strife

anger

unforgiveness

bitterness

revenge

conflict

violence

Evil spirits seek to make people instruments of fear, anger, hatred, and destruction. They fill minds with negative accusations against others so that people become filled with fear, rage, bitterness, unforgiveness, hate and hostility — eventually acting out through words, behaviour, and sometimes in violence.

The devil constantly stirs conflict this way by falsely accusing people through each other, so we lose our peace and attack one another. When negative thoughts arise about others, we should pause, reflect, and seek whether those thoughts are actually true before responding. Fearful thoughts from the evil creating so much fear anxiety worry and depression. This is a very common strategy the devil use in marriages to attack marriages, to separate and divide the family, so children grow up without both parents living together. God calls us to respond in peace, wisdom, forgiveness, and love — not through revenge and destruction.

Some false accusation thoughts include:

“They did this.”

“They said that.”

“They like someone else”

“Are they really working back late?

“You can’t trust them.”

“They want to hurt you.”

“Are you just going to let them?”

“They aren’t the one you should of married.”

“There is someone better.”

I have also heard many accounts of people tormented by voices telling them to hurt themselves or others. This is real, and we need to be aware of it.

Anthony Hopkins once said:

“Something inside me kept saying: destroy yourself.”

Voices and Torment

I would like to share another story — this time from my own experience. This account contains disturbing content, but it reveals the seriousness of spiritual torment.

Over many years of helping people, I repeatedly encountered people suffering severe mental torment and apparent demonic oppression with very little real help available.

I was reflecting on an article from a UK publication about two women who were tormented daily by voices and destructive thoughts. They had normal jobs and seemingly normal lives, yet they shared how these negative thoughts and voices were tormenting them.

This is what I wrote.

'In 2013, I was at a hotel near Sydney Harbour writing about mental illness and the voices people hear. It was a busy workday—people off to work, their offices, thousands upon thousands disappearing into the burrows for a day's work.

I pulled up in my chair in the hotel café overlooking the glistening water of the harbour. I could see the Sydney Opera House and watched as it morphed through the morning sun, changing its character with each shift in the sun's projection.

I was reading a story about two UK women in a helpful article from the Guardian - "Living with anxiety: Britain's silent epidemic". Each had their own unique story, but they were much the same. Here is some of the story.

As I recall, they were in their twenties, with the world ahead of them—young professional. Let's call them Tracey and Sarah. Sarah was a talented woman working in the creative space in downtown London. Tracey was working in an office, both with so much potential.

They lived very separate lives, but they had a common denominator that united them — fear, anxiety and voices! They both struggled with voices, hearing voices, nasty voices that plagued them. They started comparing and fear came in, and negative thoughts that they weren't good enough.

Tracey said "I thought: I need to do something about this, because panic attacks are the worst. You feel like you're going mad, like you're going to die; worrying about everything, feeling out of control, wondering what you sound like and what you look like. The voice in your head, it's constant. You can't stop it. It's exhausting."

This went on day after day, week after week, month after month. The voices didn't want to be silenced; they were relentless.

They were in a desperate situation—it was the eleventh hour; they needed saving.

I wrote about how, in the field of psychology, they call the voices people hear **auditory hallucinations**—fragments of their minds, hallucinations of the brain, the mind playing tricks on them. But to the person experiencing this, it is not a hallucination. It is real. The voices are often not just psychological but I believe spiritual and real, the impacts are real, the damage is real.

The spiritual torment causes great mental torment.

So, we are left with the question: What are they experiencing? What is happening to them? What are the voices? I began to share how we live in a physical and spiritual world—the kingdom of darkness and evil spirits that torment people. Good and evil exist, the devil and God exists, light and darkness exist, angels and demons exist. It is a world we do not often talk about, yet many acknowledge it is real.

The Bible explains it like this

“The thief (the Devil) comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I (Jesus) came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” John 10:10

The thief is stealing, and Jesus came to give life and freedom.

As with Sarah and Tracey, I believe they were also plagued by evil spirits, tormenting their lives and causing great fear, anxiety, and mental illness. Evil spirits can come in through sin — behaviours that go against God’s character, will, and ways. When we submit to evil behaviours, we can open spiritual doors for evil spirits to enter.

Fear is a common one, with evil spirits ensnaring people through negative thoughts and fears of not having enough money, rejection, being hurt, and so on. To the point where people believe those thoughts and voices, empowering the spirit of fear to enter them. **This is what is causing so much fear, anxiety, and depression.**

Today, fear and anxiety are increasing exponentially, contributing to growing levels of depression, hopelessness, and suicide.

The Church, by and large, has been silent on this matter. It has not spoken up to be the spiritual light that it should have been and needed to be.

In the early Church, and indeed throughout Jesus' ministry, it was common for Jesus to cast out demons from people. People knew they were possessed or oppressed by demons and needed a Saviour—they needed deliverance from evil.

As recorded many times in the Bible, Jesus set the captives free from sickness, infirmities, and demonic oppression.

*"And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom **and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.** So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, **those oppressed by demons**, those having seizures, and paralytics, **and he healed them.** And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan." — Matthew 4:23–25*

Jesus also gave His disciples authority to continue this work—destroying the devil's work and setting people free:

*"And he called to him his twelve disciples **and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.**" — Matthew 10:1*

Sadly, as the years went on, the Church steered away from Christ's command to "cast out demons" and instead began to cast out people—rejecting and excluding people from Church fellowship if they had something wrong with them.

Oh, how far we have come.

Myself included.

Society would tell us not to talk about it, and be quiet. But we need to. People are taking their own lives to escape the torment.

We have strayed from being like Christ and from doing the work of Christ. Instead, the Church has conformed to the mainstream:

"Don't rock the boat."

"People will think we are mad if we talk about demons."

We have become a silent Body of Christ, denying His power and authority over the kingdom of darkness. Sadly, darkness has roamed free, tormenting and destroying lives. For this I am sorry. I was writing about how such experiences are often diagnosed purely as mental illness, yet there can also be a spiritual dimension involving demonic torment.

Christians are called to continue the ministry of Jesus:

- Proclaiming salvation
- Healing
- Deliverance
- Freedom from demons

Just as Jesus did throughout the Gospels. I was also appealing for greater understanding that people may be experiencing both mental illness and

spiritual torment together—not merely chemical, cognitive, or psychosocial factors alone.

Too many people are being tormented day and night by hateful thoughts and voices they cannot silence.

And many are being driven towards hopelessness and suicide.

It is time for the Church to arise. It is time for Christians arise to minister the life and love of Jesus. It is time for Christians to continue Jesus' ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit. God is able—are we willing?

The Cost of Silence - my experience

After several hours of writing this near the harbour, I packed up my things and began walking back toward the city. Only minutes later I heard a commotion. I turned and saw that a young woman had just jumped from a building. Police quickly attended the scene from their station next door.

Miraculously, she survived, but was seriously injured. She appeared to be young.

And I wondered:

Was she battling the same torment? The same voices? The same darkness? One moment I was writing about the need to speak up for people suffering demonic torment. The next moment, I was witnessing the devastating reality of what happens when mental torment pushes people over the edge.

It shocked me deeply. But more than anything, it made me angry. We cannot continue allowing the devil to torment, destroy, and steal lives. It was the third time I have witnessed such an experience.

It is not right.

It is not God's will. There is hope.

Here are a few examples of well-known people who described experiencing tormenting voices and inner darkness, representing the ongoing torment they experienced. They were not merely “mad” or insane. They were sharing real-life experiences and deep torment that profoundly affected their lives.

One of the most important things we can do for people experiencing audible or visual torment is:

- not judge them as “crazy,” “mad,” or having “lost it”
- understand that the experience feels very real to them
- show compassion for the torment they are going through
- ensure they and others are safe
- seek appropriate support and help
- encourage prayer, pastoral care, and spiritual support if they desire it

- contact emergency or medical services if the individual or others are at immediate risk of harm

Disclaimer

This is a spiritual discussion and reflection, not professional medical advice. These were human beings suffering deep torment. I share these examples not to sensationalise these tragedies, but to highlight them, discuss them, explore them, and bring them into the light. These are not isolated incidents.

For many people, tormenting voices, destructive thoughts, fear, condemnation, and inner darkness are daily realities. Thousands of people around the world live with this torment every day. We need to speak about it openly so that we can better understand it and help people find hope, healing, freedom, peace, and life.

There is hope.

The light overcomes the darkness.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” — John 1:5

“A divine voice comes to me.” Socrates (470–399 BC)

Only recently I spoke with another man who described experiencing tormenting voices and spiritual oppression, he said after opening spiritual doors through temptation and sin that lead to addiction and spiritual slavery.

He had been a highly functioning corporate leader before, until in his distress of what he was experiencing he started sharing his experiences to seek help. People thought he was crazy. Medical services were called, and he was taken to hospital and a long journey began.

He shared how he was medicated and sedated, with ongoing medication negatively impacting his mood, personality, and cognitive function. His life has been substantially altered, changing who he was. He turned to Jesus, and he is now on the road to life and freedom.

There remains a massive gap in understanding and managing spiritual oppression and torment. I believe there are times when mental illness and spiritual harassment overlap and co-exist and so does our combined help need to.

An Apology

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” — John 3:17

God didn’t send Jesus to condemn us but to save us and we shouldn’t condemn others, for Jesus died for everyone’s sin once and for all.

I want to apologise as a Christian for the times we have not represented God well and have not loved others as He commanded. For the times when I, and we, have judged and condemned people. For the times we have failed to respond to people obviously suffering spiritual torment and oppression.

For the times we failed to pray. Failed to love and care. Failed to minister the freedom of Jesus. Failed to stop. Failed to share the eternal life Jesus died to give.

Failed to walk in the authority Jesus gave us through His death and resurrection.

For the times fear, reputation, judgment, or cowardice stopped us from helping those tormented day and night. Lord help me and us!

Jesus came proclaiming:

salvation

healing

freedom

deliverance

For this I am truly sorry.

Christians are called to continue His work through the power of the Holy Spirit.

As long as we remain silent:

the torment continues

the destruction continues

the darkness continues

the loss of precious lives continues

Silence has a cost. I have felt convicted by this myself. I too have remained silent at times. I have judged at times. But now I choose to speak.

I choose to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ. For He has all authority in Heaven and on earth. And He came to destroy the works of the devil.

It's Time

It is time for the Church to arise. It is time for Christians to minister the life and love of God and freedom of Jesus. It is time for Christians to continue the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is time to proclaim the Gospel.

It is time to pray for the healing.

To the person experiencing torment, it feels very real. The fear is real. The torment is real. The voices feel real. The suffering is real.

Yet there is real hope. Real Freedom. Real love. Real life. Real peace in Jesus!

Authority in Jesus Christ

The Name above every name.

“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:8–11

Biblical foundation:

The authority of Jesus Christ

The believer's authority in Christ

Victory over the enemy

The power of Jesus' name

Overcoming through the blood of the Lamb

Christ's lordship over every spiritual power

They Overcame by the Blood of the Lamb

“And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.” — Revelation 12:11

These Scriptures establish Jesus' authority over Satan:

1. Jesus Has All Authority — Matthew 28:18

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’”

2. Jesus Gives Authority Over the Enemy to His Followers — Luke 10:17–19

“The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!’ And he said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.’”

3. Jesus Is Lord Over All Creation and Every Spiritual Power — Philippians 2:9–11

“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The Illusion of Prosperity

Today our modern age celebrates external wealth:

success

status

self-made glory

possessions

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?” — Matthew 16:26

We measure value by: but we are bankrupt spiritually empty and void of life and freedom in God.

We gained the world and forfeited our soul, God and eternal life.

The Great Bankruptcy — The bankruptcy of our soul

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” — 1 John 2:15

When we love the world we are bankrupt of the Father's love.

I say all this to say that people are bankrupt. Bankrupt spiritually in their soul.

Bankrupt of the life of God

Bankrupt of the love of God

Bankrupt of the light of God

Bankrupt of the truth of God

Bankrupt of the freedom of God

Bankrupt of the peace of God

Bankrupt of the hope of God

The great bankruptcy is the Great exchange – exchange God for the world.

3. The Great Love and the Great Salvation

The Great Sin — The great dividing wall

Sin Separates Us from God

So, so many people react to that word. What is it about the word *sin* that makes people react, cringe, turn away, feel angry, or feel convicted? After all, it is just a word. Sin is just a word, but it's more than just a word. It's what it represents.

Let's look into a definition of the word *sin*, and let's start to explore the significance of that word.

“The offence of breaking, or the breaking of, a religious or moral law.” — *Cambridge Dictionary*

The primary Hebrew word for sin in the Bible is *chata*, or its noun form, occurring over 500 times in the Old Testament. It means to “miss the mark.” It relates to God's moral and spiritual law. So, when we say we *sin*, it is saying we haven't kept God's spiritual law — we missed the mark, fell short, and failed.

So, it poses the question then: what is God's moral and spiritual law?

In the Bible, God called Moses to be Israel's deliverer from slavery in Egypt. Moses led the Israelites out into the wilderness.

God appeared to Moses on the mountain in a dramatic, holy, and awe-inspiring moment. There, God declared the Ten Commandments, which Moses transcribed onto stone.

The 10 Commandments

“And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, ‘Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them.’² The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.³ Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today.⁴ The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire,⁵ while I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord. For you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. He said:

⁶ “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

⁷ “You shall have no other gods before me.

⁸ “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁹ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ¹⁰ but showing steadfast love to thousand of those who love me and keep my commandments.

¹¹ “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

¹² “Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. ¹⁵ You shall remember that you were a slave^l in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

¹⁶ “Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

¹⁷ “You shall not murder.

¹⁸ “And you shall not commit adultery.

¹⁹ “And you shall not steal.

²⁰ “And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

²¹ “And you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.’

²² “These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and he added no more.”

Deuteronomy 5:1-22

We have all broken God’s commandments meaning we have sinned and the penalty for sin- is death.

²³ *“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Romans 6:23

We all deserved the death penalty for we have all broken God's Commandments.

The Great Love — A greater love

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16

Love Came Down

God gave His ultimate treasure, His greatest love, for our greatest need — Jesus, His only Son — to do what we could not do: save ourselves and redeem ourselves.

The love of God is beyond limit. It is endless, limitless, everlasting, like a continual flowing stream for you and me. We cannot comprehend the love of God, but it is who God is. God is love!

1 John 4:8

“Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

How can you say we are to love God?

The answer to that question is simple:

1 John 4:19

“We love because he first loved us.”

We do not have to manufacture a limited human love. No, God loves us and offers a true love, spiritual love that satisfies the soul.

We love because He, God, first loved us. Human love is limited. Human love is flawed, selfish, and self-centred by nature. But God's love is sacrificial and eternal.

It gives.

And it gave His one and only Son, whom He loved with all His being.

Why?

Because He loves you with all His being.

You are loved!

The Great Love with Which He Loved Us

*“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind **But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,**” - Ephesians 2:1-4*

Amen, praise God!

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us.”

How great is God's love!

God's love is greater than the devils hate.

God's love is greater than the darkness.

God's love is greater than our sin.

God's love is greater than our rebellion.

God's love is greater than our blasphemy.

God's love is greater than our mistakes for God is love!

God's love is greater than the hurt we caused others.

God's love is greater than our dislike of Him.

God's love is greater than our accusations against Him.

God's love is greater than our hatred towards Him.

God's love is greater than His wrath, His justice, and His righteousness.

In God, mercy triumphs over judgement. No matter where you are today.

No matter how far you are from God and His love today. No matter how much darkness you're in today.

No matter how much enslavement you're in today. No matter how much addiction you're in today. God is drawing close to you today. His love is drawing close to you today. God's love is greater, stronger and everlasting!

God the Father is greater, and His arms are open wide, saying, “I sent My Son to bring you home. Come home!”

The Ultimate Proof of God's Love

The ultimate proof of God's love is Jesus' sacrifice for our salvation. In God's justice and righteousness, our sin separated us from God. God wasn't content to love us from heaven or simply tell us He loves us.

No — Love came down. God came down to declare to us; He loves us, through Jesus on the Cross, with Jesus' arms spread wide declaring: "I love you. I love you. I love you." Today you need to know that sin DOES NOT need to separate you from God and His love. God removed the dividing wall once and for all. Through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus in the shedding of His blood for your sin, my sin, and the sin of humanity.

Love came down

Love laid down

Love conquered

Now you can come.

We all can come. Come home to our Father.

God is calling your name, declaring: "I love you. You can come unto Me, to My embrace. I want to welcome you home." Love ripples out from the Cross of Christ across humanity, across generations, across time.

God declaring: "I love you!"

Love begins with God — He loved us before we loved Him. Nothing can separate us from God's love — it is eternal and unbreakable. God's love changes our hearts and purpose. God's love restores our Garden of Eden of our soul.

*"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**"*

Romans 8:37-39

May we not let anything come between our love for God.

The Great Salvation — Humanity's greatest hope

"How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" — Hebrews 2:3

What comes to mind as you reflect on the Cross?

What comes to mind when you think of Jesus?

What comes to mind when you think of Jesus' suffering?

What comes to mind reflecting on Jesus dying for you?

What comes to mind reflecting on Jesus dying for your sin?

The great salvation comes from Jesus Christ! The great deliverance comes from Jesus Christ!

The Bible is explicit in its description of Jesus' crucifixion. Take time now to slowly read through the account in the Gospel of Luke. Pause when you

need to, to ponder and reflect on what Jesus was going through and what He was experiencing.

Note: Seek a quiet and undistracted space.

The Crucifixion — The Great Love

“And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?

Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ And they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, ‘He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!’ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’ There was also an inscription over him, ‘This is the King of the Jews.’”

*One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, **“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”***

Luke 23:26-43

The Death of Jesus

This isn't something that we deserved.

We deserved the wrath of God.

We didn't deserve the love of God. That we deserved the wrath of God shows the immeasurable immensity of the love of God for you and His creation, His sons and daughters, whom He wanted to redeem and reconcile back unto Himself.

Will we hear the call today? Will we receive that reconciliation and the invitation to be reconciled back to God?

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

*But the **free gift** is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following **one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.**” —Romans 5:12-16*

But through Jesus Christ, the great redemption began. Where Adam brought death and separation, Christ restores reconciliation. Where sin brought death, Christ brought life. Where humanity lost access to the Tree of Life, Jesus became the way back to eternal life.

The Great Redemption — The blood of Jesus

Justified by His Blood

“Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.” Romans 5:9

Once for All

“And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Hebrews 10:10

Blood that overcomes

“And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.”

— Revelation 12:11

In the Old Testament, blood sacrifices were offered for sin because sin brought death. The shedding of blood symbolised a life being given in the place of another. But those sacrifices were temporary and incomplete. But oh, the blood of Jesus that took away the sins of the world — once and for all. It is the blood — only the blood — that could redeem us, justify us, and reconcile us.

“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 all sin.” — 1 John 1:7

For without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. Jesus did what we could not do. He made atonement for our sin. The sinless, spotless blood of the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world.

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29

The great exchange can now be reversed through Christ. It is the blood of Jesus — the blood that He shed as the sinless Saviour for the atonement of our sins.

The Cross was the great exchange. Jesus took our sin, shame, and death — so, we could receive forgiveness, freedom, and eternal life. Now we will look at the Apostle Paul’s exaltation on the resurrection of Christ, the new life, and restoration that came through Christ, the Second Adam.

The Resurrection of Christ

Hold fast to the truth! Don’t let it go. They are words of eternal life that can save your soul.

*“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: **that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,** and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.”*

—1 Corinthians 15:3-8

The exaltation is this:

“For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.” — 1 Corinthians 15:53

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’

‘O death, where is your victory?’

O death, where is your sting?’

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.” — 1 Corinthians 15:54–58

Sin was death, and the law was what judged us — that was its power. But thanks be to God! For Jesus conquered death, paid the full price for the atonement of the law, and fulfilled the law and its judgement. He has the victory over death, and we reign with Him.

In a moment we will be changed from perishable to imperishable, and from mortal to immortality. That is — you live forever with a spiritual body. Death is defeated, and you live in the resurrection life of Jesus!

Perishable is replaced with the imperishable.

Jesus's redemption clothes us with immortality.

Mortal is replaced with immortality. All because of the love of God the Father, the sacrifice of the Son of God — Jesus!

4. The Great Light and the New Creation

The Great Light — The great enlightenment

Light of the world — we needed light, for we were in darkness. The whole world was in darkness. Humanity was in darkness. The great enlightenment led to a great spiritual darkness.

Minds illuminated and souls darkened.

Darkness shattered our morality, our humanity, and our spirituality. We became like vagabonds wandering on the earth, searching here, searching there, seeking here, seeking there for hope, for help, for light, meaning, and purpose. Like vagabonds wandering aimlessly, not knowing where to go.

We were lost.

Humanity was lost. Lost and wandering around in the dark and not finding a way. It was as though humanity was lost in a big dark room searching for the door out.

Jesus came declaring:

“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

— *John 8:12*

Will we follow Jesus into the light?

The New Creation — The garden restored

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.” —2 Corinthians 5 17:19

What a glorious statement, what a glorious truth.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.” — 2 Corinthians 5:17

In Christ — what does that mean? I can be in a lot of things, but this is different. Being in Christ leads to a new creation — spiritually made new. What does that mean, and how is it so?

Why does it matter to me? This is the glorious mystery and gift from God. Let’s unpack this to reveal its splendour and Kingdom majesty.

You Must Be Born Again

*“Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”⁴ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’”⁵ Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, **‘You must be born again.’** The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. **So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.**”*

Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.’” — John 3:1-15

Nicodemus, a religious ruler, came to Jesus to enquire of Him, noting the signs Jesus was doing and that He must have come from God, for no one could do these signs unless God was with him. Jesus wasn’t perplexed by this statement or puffed up by the compliment, but Jesus straight away turned to a greater sign that was available to Nicodemus:

*“Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born again** he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” — John 3:3*

Jesus was more concerned about Nicodemus entering the Kingdom of God. But Jesus said that you cannot enter the Kingdom of God unless you are “born again”. This led Nicodemus into a tailspin of confusion, trying to reason logically how a man could be born again.

Questioning how a man could enter the womb of his mother a second time to be “born again”.

Jesus stated plainly to Nicodemus:

“Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’” — John 3:5

Jesus makes it clear that it wasn’t a natural birth we must go through again, but a spiritual birth — one of water and the Spirit. This wasn’t some cosmic random act of the Spirit of God coming and descending on a person. This wasn’t God randomly selecting who is and who isn’t born again.

This is an act of the will of men and women surrendering their life to God. It is a spiritual birth that leads us to a Spiritual baptism that is water baptism, which Jesus modelled in Matthew 3.

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” — Matthew 3:11

The following Scripture is a dialogue between Jesus and John the Baptist regarding water baptism.

*“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ But Jesus answered him, ‘**Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**’ Then he consented.” — Matthew 3:13–15*

Being water baptised is a righteous requirement that Jesus was setting the example of. It is the spiritual cleansing of our bodies so they can be holy temples in the Lord for the Holy Spirit to dwell in — that is being born again.

Water baptism — for spiritual cleansing.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit — the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Being baptised with water and the Holy Spirit is being *“born of water and the Spirit.”* — John 3:5

Born again and baptised in the Holy Spirit. That is the precious gift on offer from God.

Let’s progress:

Spirit of Adoption

*“So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the **Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” — Romans 8 12-17*

This is one of the glorious mysteries in the Bible, and of God and humanity.

Verse 15 states:

“But you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”

God gives us not only His Holy Spirit, but a Spirit of adoption as sons. This is not that “Sons” is only for males, no it a role that all believers inherit sonship is the role we are promoted to heirs and co-heirs with Christ.

In the first century, the son was the legal heir who inherited his father's estate and carried the full rights, privileges, and responsibilities of the family. Through faith in Jesus Christ, God adopts every believer—male and female—into His family with the full rights, privileges, and inheritance of a son.

Every believer is therefore an heir of God and can cry, “Abba! Father!” I believe as new creations in Christ, we see that the Holy Spirit is not God just giving random gifts or His Holy Spirit for no reason. This is a Spirit of adoption. God’s Spirit dwelling in us. God saying you are my child the heir of eternal life and the Kingdom of God.

God the Father from heaven saying:

“You are Mine. I adopt you into My family. You are My child, and I am your Heavenly Father.”

This adoption is beyond words, beyond description. Even if I use this extremely poor analogy, it’s like you adopting an ant to be your child and you becoming its parent. It is too glorious to comprehend the Heavenly Father adopting us into His Heavenly family.

We can be adopted into by faith in God.

The Great Father — The Father’s love

I have been a Christian for almost three decades, and God’s great love still impacts me to this day. That God, who created the whole universe, wasn’t content just to be God, and not just a Father of all creation, but a loving

Father who wants to adopt us as His children, to father us as the family of God.

And for me, over those years, this hasn't just been a concept I've read about or learned about through the Lord's Prayer:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

This wasn't something I merely heard during a sermon. Although that impacted me, what has impacted me most is experiencing God as my Heavenly Father loving me as His child, His son. I can't tell you the depth and the riches that come from knowing the love of God as a Heavenly Father.

It changed the way I prayed. It changed the way I viewed God. It changed my expectations. It changed the way I live.

It changed my relationship with Him. It changed me from the inside out. It brought life love and light to my soul. My soul found its home in God.

And most of all, it changed my heart to love God more, to know Him more, surrender to Him more, and to live for Him more. But to understand Father God, we have to go to the Scriptures. So, let's go on a journey to explore God as our Heavenly Father.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

"And he said, 'There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

*"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" And he arose and came to his father. **But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.** And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your*

son.’ But the father said to his servants, **‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’** And they began to celebrate.

“Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’” — Luke 15:11-32

What a powerful climax. The young man is broken, walking back to his father with great shame ready for his father’s punishment. Then he sees his father in the distance. His heart sinks in fear. He sees his father running towards him. Fear seeks to overtake him, to make him run away. But then he realises that the father running towards him is not running in anger and rage.

He is running in love.

It is the father running with his arms open, saying:

“My son, my son.”

The father ran to him and embraced him and kissed him.

He declares the lines he rehearsed over the previous days:

“I have sinned, and I am no longer worthy to be your son.”

But the father’s embrace tells him otherwise. The embrace covers the disgrace with a love that is greater. The love of a father. A loving father. A father who doesn’t look at the guilt, the shame, the sin, the rebellion, the disgrace, or the immorality as greater than his love.

His forgiveness is greater. In that moment, the son’s repentance is met by the father’s embrace. The father’s love melts away the son’s reproach and

iniquities. The father isn't concerned with keeping an account of right and wrongs, or what the son did to him, or what he took from him.

This is the father's heart for his son:

To welcome him home. To be united with him. To cover his shame in His loving embrace.

That is the Father's heart for you and me. He is longing for you to come home. Your Heavenly Father is waiting, His arms open wide to receive you!

The Great Son — The Saviour of the world

"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?'" — Matthew 16:13

Who Do You Say Jesus Is?

This is a powerful question Jesus asked His disciples. Many people over the centuries have had different thoughts on who Jesus is:

A good man.

A teacher.

A prophet.

A miracle worker.

A religious leader. I guess the list goes on and on and on.

No doubt Jesus has been the most talked about person in all of history. Even today, some 2,000 years on from His time on earth, the teachings of Jesus continue, the stories of Jesus continue, and the preaching of Jesus continues to this day.

But how about you? Who do you say Jesus is? I pray that as we explore Jesus, you would have a personal revelation and a deeper understanding of who Jesus is. The Son of God the Saviour of the world.

Who Is Jesus?

"And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world." — 1 John 4:14

The Son of God — The Saviour of the World

If we are going to understand our salvation, we need to understand Jesus.

Who He is.

Why He came.

What He achieved for you and I. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. To explore this, we need to go to the truth — the Word of God, the Bible — to read that truth and reflect on that truth. Let's not rush through this chapter.

As we reflect on these Scriptures, they will speak life, revelation, and truth to you. These Scriptures contain some of the most powerful and impacting truths. There is a bit of commentary, but let's let the Scriptures speak.

Jesus Is the Son of God

Jesus is the holy Son of God, sent by the Father into the world.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

— John 3:16

Jesus Is the Only Way to God

Jesus declared that salvation and eternal life are found through Him.

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” — John 14:6

Jesus restores humanity's relationship with God.

Jesus Offers Eternal Life

Jesus invites people into forgiveness, freedom, salvation, and eternal life.

“Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he died, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

— John 11:25-26

Jesus is asking us the same question: **Do we believe this?**

True everlasting life is found in Him.

Jesus conquered for us:

sin

death

darkness

the devil

Salvation in no other name:

“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” — Acts 4:12

The Great Holy Spirit — ‘Deus in nobis’ - God in us

“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?” — 1 Corinthians 3:16

I don't know about you, but I've received some nice gifts in my life. Not overly extravagant or extremely expensive, but nice, meaningful gifts. Some given out of obligation and some out of love. Whatever the motive or reason, it's nice to receive a gift. But there is one gift that surpasses them all.

There is one gift which cannot be compared with any other, in impact or in value. If you combined all the riches and treasures of earth, it still could not compare to this gift. If you combined all the human love in the world, it still would not equate to this gift. If you summoned all the power of this world, it still could not compare to this heavenly gift.

It is simply:

Deus in nobis — God in us.

It is God. The Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit. But more than that, it is the Holy Spirit given to us. But more than that, it is the Holy Spirit indwelling us. That, it is God in us.

The more I ponder that thought, the more it bewilders me. God, whom the whole universe cannot contain. According to the Bible, heaven and earth cannot contain God — His greatness, His vastness.

As King Solomon stated:

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!” — 1 Kings 8:27

He was questioning how, if the universe cannot contain God, how much less the house he built for God to dwell in. This was an extraordinary moment, that God again desired to dwell with man. God wanted habitation with His chosen people — a covenant relationship where He loved them and they loved Him.

So, the thought that God desires to dwell within us is one that doesn't make any rational, logical, practical, or philosophical sense. Why would the Divine want to dwell with humanity? More than that, why would the Divine desire to dwell within mankind? But if we take it even further—not just God dwelling with you, but **God desiring to dwell in you.**

God dwelling in mankind.

These concepts and questions are mind-baffling and not a simple formula of $1 + 1 = 2$. Defying the logical reason that God, the Creator of heaven and earth, would want to dwell within us. And as we search and explore this question, we can only come to one conclusion:

Love.

God was not content being separated from what He loves — you. So the rescue mission was set in full swing for us to be redeemed and adopted into the family of God. Jesus being our Lord. And God being our Heavenly Father. So, who is the Holy Spirit?

What is His uniqueness?

What is His role?

What is our role, purpose and function with the Holy Spirit?

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

God With Us — God Within Us

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He is not merely a force, feeling, or energy. The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit Is God

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.” — John 15:26

The Holy Spirit Is One with the Father and the Son

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” — Matthew 28:19

Two Main Functions of the Holy Spirit

1. Internal Transformation — To Love

The Holy Spirit transforms our inner life, changing us from our sinful nature towards Christlike character. The Holy Spirit teaches us to love God, obey God, walk in holiness, and become more like Jesus Christ.

“And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’” — Matthew 22:37

2. External Mission — To Witness

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to continue the ministry of Jesus:

- proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God
- loving people
- serving others

- bearing the fruit of the Spirit
- and making disciples

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” — Matthew 28:19

Thank You, Holy Spirit, for all You are and all You do. Thank You for dwelling in us. Empowering us to be witnesses of Jesus. May we yield to You, be transformed by You, and become more like You.

5. The Faithful Follower — The Great Investor

The Faithful Follower — Come, follow Me

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

— Matthew 16:24

As I shared some of my story earlier, I became a believer, a lover of God, and a follower of Christ. But God had to take me on a journey. It was a long journey of many years of transformation, transforming my nature and character from walking in the sinful nature to walking in the Spirit, being transformed into the image and likeness of Christ. For darkness to go. For light to come. For love to come. For truth to come. For freedom to come. For grace to come.

God is doing a great work by His Holy Spirit. What I share with you is that I experienced God in greater fullness primarily because of this one thing: I surrendered my life to God. I didn't just believe in Him. I didn't just go to church once a week.

The Great Surrender

For me, that happened when I was twenty-three years old and ended up at a church service on a Friday night when I would normally have been out in the city.

In a small church service that night, I surrendered my life to God. Jesus cannot be Lord of your life until you give your life to Him. **And when you give your life to Jesus and He becomes Lord of your life:**

There is divine protection. There is divine provision. There is divine love. Divine truth. Divine encounter. Divine union. In surrender, we gain Christ. We gain life.

I actually surrendered my life to God and gave my life to Him. At that moment, there was a divine exchange, where I exchanged my old sinful, empty, meaningless life and gave it to God and He gave me true Life!

What that means is that God's Holy Spirit is dwelling in me, filling me, leading me, guiding me, transforming me, and working in me to do the will of God the Father. None of that would have happened if I had kept holding onto my life. This book would not have happened.

Eighteen months ago, the Lord called me to come and follow Him. This wasn't just a general call to live for Him, but like the disciples: leave and come follow Me. I wasn't obedient at first. For the first month, I tried to rationalise God's plan into my own plan. But because I had surrendered my life, God worked out His will.

I've now been living by faith for more than 18 months with no regular income. God wanted my time, my availability, and my life to love and serve Him – be fully available for Him. It's been an amazing journey. When I look back and see what God has done over those eighteen months, I see how God has taken the little that I could offer and multiplied it exponentially. Yes, there has been sacrifice, but out of that sacrifice and the seed of surrender, God can grow something great for His Kingdom.

The Will of God

In the past I have lived life my own way, doing what I wanted, pursuing what I desired — success, money, and pleasure. I thought that was just life.

What I have learned is that when I surrendered my life to God, I found true fulfilment in doing God's will – Living for God. I now realise that everything else is empty, meaningless, and unfulfilling.

I found life in its fullest through surrender and obedience to God's will, with God living through my life.

My desires changed from wanting things to desiring God. I guess, in a sense, I lost my life and found His. To lose your life for God and follow Him as He calls us to is not an easy road. It's a sacrificial road, but it is the most glorious and meaningful one.

To be consecrated and devoted to Him.

To be available to Him. To love God with my all and above all. That is investing for eternity.

My Heart Breaks

I've been a Christian for many years, serving as a chaplain, ministering and helping people in the community through crisis, addictions, mental illness, and many different situations across society. I've met so many people who say they're Christian. And it breaks my heart (and I am sure God's) to see that so many don't truly love God.

They don't live for God.

They don't know God.

They simply haven't fully surrendered their life holding onto it, sadly the Bible says they will lose it.

Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus

"Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what

shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.” — Matthew 16:24-28

What stood out to you?

What came to mind?

What do you think Jesus was saying to you through this passage?

We can find ourselves deeply challenged by Jesus’ teaching on the way of discipleship.

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” — Matthew 16:24

Again, it is this denying of ourselves and taking up our cross. Dying to self so that we can truly follow Jesus. Not following our own will. Not following the world. But following Christ – following Him into eternity.

Then Jesus continues:

“For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” — Matthew 16:25

Again, Jesus speaks to those who want to save and preserve their own life, giving a very clear warning:

You will lose it. That is losing your life for eternity. We need to take heed of Jesus’ words and follow His way to eternal life.

Conversely, whoever loses their life for Jesus’ sake will find it. This is speaking of eternal life.

True life.

Life in God.

Then Jesus brings us to the very centre of the matter — the soul, what we live for and what we love.

What are you living for? Are you trying to save your life?

The Greatest Commandment

“And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” — Matthew 22:37–40

The Great Commission

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” — Matthew 28:19–20

This is the commandment and mission of all believers.

And we will only love God with all our heart soul, mind and go and make disciples, if We have surrendered our life to God, and living to do his will.

Our Role and Purpose as Faithful Followers of Jesus

These are the things the Holy Spirit empowers us to be, live, and do as followers of Christ.

Love God and Live for Him

To Love God with All Our Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength — Matthew 22:37

To Do the Will of God — Matthew 6:10

To Surrender All — Romans 12:1

To Walk Worthy of God — 1 Thessalonians 2:12

To Walk Worthy of Our Calling — Ephesians 4:1

To Follow Jesus and Be His Disciples — Luke 9:23

Go and make disciples — Matthew 28:19

Walk in the Holy Spirit

To Walk by the Spirit — Galatians 5:16

To Be Led by the Spirit — Romans 8:14

To Bear the Fruit of the Holy Spirit — Galatians 5:22–23

To Use the Gifts of the Holy Spirit — 1 Corinthians 12:4–7

To Not Grieve the Holy Spirit — Ephesians 4:30

To Not Quench, Restrict, or Resist the Holy Spirit — 1 Thessalonians 5:19

The Great Investor — Investing for eternal life

As we progress from *The Faithful Follower*, we now enter into *The Great Investor* — investing for eternal life. It sounds exciting, let's unpack it together.

You know, we all cannot be great investors on earth. By that I mean financial investors, property investors, or business investors, where we can guarantee the returns we want. But we can all become great investors for eternity, with eternal rewards that far exceed all earthly rewards, as we faithfully follow the Lord with whatever time we have left.

Why, you may ask?

The Great Investment

Investment into the Flesh vs Investment into the Spirit

How is your investment portfolio? Is it mostly investing into the flesh? And are your returns mostly from the flesh? Or are you mostly investing into the Spirit and reaping its returns?

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

— Galatians 6:7–8

Investment Return

Investment in the flesh = Corruption

Investment in the Spirit = Eternal Life

Sons of God

“So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” — Romans 8:12–14

Investment Return

Living according to the flesh = Death

Living according to the Spirit = Life

What can I say but that this passage clearly illustrates the division between the flesh and the Spirit.

Death and life.

Verse 12 says we are debtors — meaning we owe something. But it is not to the flesh. Why? For if we live according to it, we die.

Verse 13, contrary to this, declares that if we live according to the Spirit, we live. If by the Spirit we put to death the deeds of the flesh, then we live. The return on being led by the Spirit is being Son of God and eternal life in the kingdom of God. That is an eternal return and reward.

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but **lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” —Matthew 6:19-21*

In life, we can lay up treasure in many things. But how do we lay up treasure in heaven? We do that by investing in loving God above all, doing God’s will, loving people, surrendering and sacrificing to follow Jesus, and sowing to the Spirit. **Investing for eternity.**

Work for what endures to Eternal life

*“Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that **endures to eternal life**, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” — John 6:27-29*

The work of God is believing in Jesus the Son of God.

This is Eternal Life

*“When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, **to give eternal life** to all whom you have given him. **And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.**” — John 17:1-3*

Eternal life is knowing God and Jesus Christ.

Earthly Investment — Heavenly Return — Eternal Reward

*“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, **you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones**, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’*

*‘**And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.**’*

But many who are first will be last, and the last first.” — Matthew 19:28–30

Jesus is saying who has left family for His name sake, **will inherit eternal life.**

Whatever we lay down in obedience to God has a heavenly reward.

Are you curious why Jesus said, *"will receive a hundredfold"*?

He is saying that whatever you leave or give up in obedience to Him, for His sake, your reward will be far greater than what you surrendered.

Being a great investor means investing for eternity. One who invests for eternity is one who surrenders, leaves everything behind, and follows Jesus. Investing our life in God!

6. Prosper Your Soul — The Great Eternity

Prosper Your Soul Bank — Life That Is Truly Life

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”

— 3 John 1:2 NKJV

Every human heart carries a memory of Eden. The fall, the separation from God. Deep within us is a longing for God, love, peace, and purpose. We have tried to fill that void with knowledge, success, pleasure, and possessions, but every substitute fades.

“You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in You.” — St Augustine

This restlessness is holy — a sacred ache that reminds us that paradise is not truly lost. The soul’s true prosperity begins when we recognise that every longing of our soul is ultimately a longing for God, for eternity for Heaven.

The prospering of our soul is very important aspect of our lives.

Why?

The Prosperous Soul is Loved by God

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are...” — 1 John 3:1

A prosperous soul is one that has opened its heart to receive the Father’s love and become His child.

The Prosperous Soul is Made Whole

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” — 3 John 1:2 KNJV

A prosperous soul is one that has been made well, healed, whole, and restored.

The Prosperous Soul Has Abundant Life

“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” — John 10:10

A prosperous soul is one that has life abundantly.

The Prosperous Soul Walks in the Light

“Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’” — John 8:12

A prosperous soul is one that has been illuminated by the truth of God.

The Prosperous Soul Has Lost its Life for Christ

“For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.” — Mark 8:35

A prosperous soul is one that has lost its life for Jesus and the Gospel and, in return, has received true spiritual life—eternal life.

The Prosperous Soul is Redeemed by Christ

“...knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.” — 1 Peter 1:18–19

A prosperous soul is one that has been ransomed and redeemed by the blood of Christ - made holy and pure, without blemish or spot.

The Prosperous Soul Loves God

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”

And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.’” — Matthew 22:36–38

A prosperous soul is one that loves God with all its heart, soul, and mind. A prosperous soul is one that loves and lives for God. A prosperous soul is one that seeks to live with God and dwell with Him forever.

The End — The curtain closes

When the Curtain Closes

One day, this life will end. In the blink of an eye, we will take our last breath and pass from this life into the next—into the spiritual world, into eternity.

We don't know when that moment will be or how it will happen, but one thing we do know is that it will come. We don't know whether it will happen suddenly through an accident, through illness or age, but every single human being will one day close their eyes and breathe their last breath.

It's not something we can negotiate. It's not something we ultimately control. It's not something we can extend for another eighty years by our own power. You and I, human, and we will pass from this earth.

The Final Reflection

What might be the condition of your life at that point?

What would it be like for you when you look back over your life?

What would come to mind in that moment?

What would you regret?

What would you want to change?

The Beginning — Where will you be?

It will be too late to turn back, change our minds, or turn back the clock.

All will be set.

All will be done.

All will be recorded in the Book of Life. And then we will come before God to give an account for our life and be judged according to what we have done. And so, as the curtain closes on our earthly life, another curtain opens onto eternal life.

And the great question posed before us is:

Where will you be?

The Great Judgement — The books are opened

“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.”

— Revelation 20:12–13

What a day, what a moment standing before Almighty God the book of life is opened our life is laid bare before God. We are judged for what we have done.

Will it be a day of great woes?

Our Life is Written

Humanity, by and large, has tried to erase God from our minds and from our conscience. No matter how hard we resist, reject, or dispute God, one thing is for sure:

We will all die.

We will all come before God. We will all have to give an account for our lives. One day we will all die. These bodies will breathe their last, and we will come before God.

The books will be opened.

Nothing hidden.

What will be written about your life?

More importantly, will your name be written in the Book of Life?

The Book of Life

“Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

— Revelation 20:14–15

Will it be a day when we find out that our name isn’t written in the Book of Life?

Will it be a day of eternal loss, eternal separation from God?

Will it be a day of eternal torment?

The Great Reward — The faithful Follower

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” — Matthew 25:34

The Reward of Eternal Life

Can we really imagine what it will be like on that day? To have our name written in the Book of Life. Entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Angels

clothing us in white linen robes. The crown of life placed upon our head.
Can we truly imagine standing in Heaven, in the glory of God?

Looking upon the throne of God — the radiance, majesty, splendour, and pure light of His presence. Heaven filled with perfect love.

Perfect peace.

Perfect joy.

Angelic worship surrounding the throne of God. No longer earthly beings, but glorified beings dwelling forever in the presence of God.

Can you imagine that moment? Can we close our eyes and try to think what it may be like?

Everything of this world would fade away.

All the pain.

All the suffering.

All the hurt.

All the sacrifice, surrender and obedience to God will be worth it.

Can you imagine coming before God the Father, and Him welcoming you into glorious Heaven, receiving the outcome of your faith—the salvation of your soul?

Can you imagine being consumed by the great love and glory of God, receiving the return on your investment—eternity with God?

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

*“Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his **Bride has made herself ready**; it was granted her to clothe herself*

*with fine linen, bright and pure, for the fine **linen is the righteous deeds of the saints**. And the angel said to me, “Write this: **Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb**.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” — Revelation 19:6-9*

There are a lot of things that I do not fully understand in the Bible. I need more than natural ability to comprehend it. I need revelation and understanding from God concerning the mysteries of His Word. This is certainly one of those passages that leaves me gasping in wonder, awe, and amazement.

Not only does God love us so much that He sent His Son to die for us, redeem us back to Himself, freely pardon our sins, and provide us with a place in Heaven—but more than that, Jesus, the Lamb of God, invites us to be His Bride—a holy and divine union.

And He, the Bridegroom. He is speaking about a heavenly marriage with His bride. His bride is those who love Him, are devoted to Him, follow Him, and serve Him – male and female. Just as a natural bride lovingly devotes herself to her groom, how much more the Bride of Christ loving, serving, and devoting herself to Jesus the Bridegroom.

It is a faithful, loving and devoted union with Christ in this life. Loving God above all, with our all, is the goal and the prize.

The Bride Has Made Herself Ready

This is a special invitation to those who truly love Him with all their heart. He is not second place in their life. He is the Lord of their life. The Lord of their heart. And there are three things that stand out to me in this passage.

First:

“The bride has made herself ready.”

How?

By living in love and devotion to the bridegroom.

Second:

“Fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.”

The Saints are invited to the wedding supper are living righteous lives with righteous deeds.

Third:

“Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb”

What could compare to that invitation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?

The invitation is to make ourselves ready.

The Great Eternity — The great homecoming

Can you imagine the homecoming? Entering Heaven with the hosts of Heaven surrounding the throne of God.

God the Father.

The Son, Jesus Christ. The angels singing.

The presence.

The awe.

The wonder.

The multitudes rejoicing.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

There is joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents. Imagine the joy and celebration of actually entering Heaven, making it there, and being welcomed into the glory of Heaven. Imagine the angelic hosts of Heaven united in praise!

*“Just so, I tell you, there will be **more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents** than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” — Luke 15:7*

*“Just so, I tell you, **there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.**” — Luke 15:10*

That joy is waiting for you. The grand, majestic homecoming is waiting for you. Heaven is cheering you on. A great cloud of witnesses calling you to run your race and finish your race.

Because if you only knew what was waiting for you on the other side of your obedience, surrender, sacrifice, faith, and faithfulness to God, you would be overwhelmed with gratitude, thanksgiving, worship, and praise unto the Lord God. It would all be worth it and all pale in significance the glory that awaits. This is what our Heavenly Father has prepared for those who love Him.

To those that overcome!

“The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

— Revelation 21:7

What a promise.

What a heritage.

What an inheritance. Prepared by God Himself for those who endure, overcome, remain faithful, and love Him unto the end.

Crown of Life

*“**Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.**” — James 1:12*

Thank you, Heavenly Father, may our love be steadfast under trial and the test to be worthy of the Crown of Life.

7. The Greatest Decision

The Greatest Decision — We all must make

Just as we started with the Garden of Eden, with Adam and Eve left with a decision to obey God or disobey God, we are left with the same decision right now. Do we reject God, believing that He isn't real, doesn't care, doesn't love us, and that Heaven isn't real? Or are we confronted with the compelling truth we have explored and laid bare before you throughout this book?

There is a battle for your soul. The devil hates you and wants to torment you in this life and the for the eternal life to come. God loves you and demonstrated that through His Son Jesus — dying for you, taking your place, your punishment, your death — so that you could be united with God now and for eternity.

We are all left with that decision—the greatest and most significant decision of our lives: where we will spend eternity.

Death or life?

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before your life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life, that you and your offspring may live,” — Deuteronomy 30:19

You have read the truth.

You have seen the reality of the great exchange — truth for a lie, light for darkness. You have seen the condition of the soul apart from God:

The disconnection.

The emptiness.

The sadness.

The bankruptcy of the soul. And you have seen something greater. The soul finding its home in God. Illuminated in the light of God.

The truth of God.

The love of God.

The salvation found in Jesus Christ. Life in the Holy Spirit. The life that is truly life. Now this is no longer about information but salvation.

This is about your decision.

It is about your eternal destination - your salvation.

One day your life will end.

The curtain will close.

You will breathe your last.

You will stand before God.

The books will be opened.

The Book of Life.

Will your name be there?

For eternity will tell.

And eternity will begin. But that moment is not when the decision is made.

The decision is made now.

In this life.

In this moment.

So, I ask you —

What will you do?

Are you living apart from God? If so, will you keep going your own way, living for pleasure, living for your own will? Will you allow the deceiver to continually rob you of truth and the thief to steal your eternal life and with God? Will you be with God for eternity or separated from God for eternity?

Or will you turn?

Will you come to God? Will you receive the forgiveness that Jesus Christ died to give you?

Will you step out of darkness into light —from death into life? This is not complicated. But it is everything.

It is your eternity — your life after this life.

Your Response

If your answer is no to God and eternal life with Him, that is the saddest thing. I grieve with your Heavenly Father for your soul. **If you are ready to choose life and say YES to God—** to turn to God, receive forgiveness, and begin a relationship with Him —you can respond right now. Pray this sincerely from your heart:

Let's Pray.

Heavenly Father,

I come to You today. I recognise that I have been living apart from You. I have gone my own way, I have sinned against you and I ask You to forgive me. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He died for me, and

that He rose again. I receive Your forgiveness. I forgive myself and I forgive others. I turn away from my old life and I turn to You. I surrender my will and my life.

Come into my life. Be my Lord and my Saviour. Please be my Heavenly Father. Restore my soul and make me new. Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Help me to follow You and to live the life You created me for.

In Jesus' name, amen.

What Happens Now

If you have prayed this sincerely from your heart, you have stepped from death into life. You have been forgiven. You have been made new through Jesus blood shed on the Cross. You have entered into a relationship with God. You have received the Holy Spirit. Now let the Holy Spirit work in you to transform you into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

This is the beginning, not the end.

Final Word

Your life is an investment. Your soul is the account; your eternity is the outcome. You have made the greatest decision. Now —walk in it.

Your Next Steps

Don't stop here. To grow and prosper in your soul:

1. Spend time with God daily

Read the Bible – start with **Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**.

Pray to your Heavenly Father (prayer is a conversation).

Listen – What is your Heavenly Father saying to you? Journal what comes to you.

Obey God's Word – Live for God, loving and obeying Him above all, with your all. Follow Jesus now and into eternity.

2. Begin Investing into Your Soul

What you invest in daily will shape your life. Guard your soul. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you, lead you in the will of God and transform you to live like Christ.

3. Take Your Next Steps:

Complete your Soul Bank Assessment

Start your 30-Day Transformation.

<https://www.humanbank.life>

Thank you for investing the time to read this book and invest in your soul.

My prayer is that it will produce a good return on your investment —the prospering of your soul in the life of God.

Reflection

This book is my earnest plea for your salvation. More than that, it was written out of God's earnest plea for the salvation of your soul. This book is simply me passing on that earnest plea.

One day this life will pass away. The noise of this world will fall silent. The pursuits, possessions, titles, pleasures, and distractions of this life will fade.

And we will stand before God. What will matter then is not what we owned, but who we belonged to. Not what we gained on earth, but whether our soul found life in God. This book has been a call back to the Father. A call back to truth, life, and relationship with the One our souls were created for. Jesus Christ.

The invitation of God still stands open.

Choose life. Choose truth. Choose forgiveness. Choose surrender. Choose love, Choose spiritual freedom. Choose eternity with God. Choose Jesus Christ. And may you invest your life in God, prosper in your soul, and have the life of God now and forevermore. God bless you, and I pray to see you in Heaven.

Michael J. Smith

Further Resources and the Complete Book

About This Mini Book

This mini book is an introductory selection from the full-length Soul Bank — Investing for Eternity by Michael J. Smith. The complete book includes further teaching, Scripture, testimonies and the Soul Profit Assessment.

Discover the complete Soul Bank — Investing for Eternity and other books: <https://www.humanbank.life/humanbankbooks>

Explore the free Human Bank™ Assessment and additional whole-life wellbeing resources: <https://www.humanbank.life>

Scripture & Source Acknowledgements

Scripture references are given throughout the text. The full-length source edition states that its Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the English Standard Version (ESV®); some passages identify other translations. Check individual passages and the applicable permission requirements before publication.

The abridged edition retains quotations and references from the source manuscript. Attributions and quotation completeness are subject to final editorial verification. The author's original teaching and testimony are preserved.

About the Author — Michael J. Smith

Michael J. Smith is the founder and originator of Human Bank™, an author, chaplain, prayer leader and radio host with a passion for helping people discover true life in God through God-centred, soul-focused, whole-life wellbeing.

He is the author of the Human Bank™ book series: Human Bank™ — The Wise Investor, Soul Bank — Investing for Eternity, and Marriage Bank — Investing for Eternity.

Human Bank™ is an innovative whole-life wellbeing framework that views our wellbeing like a bank — something we continually invest in and withdraw from, resulting in profit or loss across the key areas of life. It helps people reflect on and invest in their physical, emotional, relational, mental and soul banks, and ultimately consider how they are investing their lives for eternity.

Michael has served in chaplaincy for more than twenty years and has been involved in Christian prayer, ministry and leadership across Sydney and Australia. His heart is to see people know God, receive His love and truth, prosper in their souls, follow Jesus, and live according to the Truth and will of God.

Through the Human Bank™ books, Human Bank™ Assessment, workshops and presentations, Michael helps individuals reflect on their Human Bank™, invest in their soul and pursue the life that is truly life.

Through the Human Bank™ series, Michael invites individuals, husbands, wives and families to put God at the centre of their lives, rediscover Him as their First Love, love Him above all, live for Him, do His will and invest their lives and families for eternity.

www.humanbank.life

Human Bank™ Books



Continue the Human Bank™ Journey

Discover more in the Human Bank™ series:

Human Bank™ — *The Wise Investor*

Soul Bank — *Investing for Eternity*

Marriage Bank — *Investing for Eternity*

Explore the complete books and resources at:

<https://www.humanbank.life/humanbankbooks>



Thank you for sharing the journey.

God loves you,

Michael J. Smith