

Article 7

Understanding fallen desire and envy

Tim Maurice

'What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel.' Jas 4:1-2.

'But each one is tempted when he is carried away [by his own desires] and enticed by his own lust. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.' Jas 1:14-16.

Eve was deceived by Satan when she believed the lie that she could be like God. Her belief of this lie immediately provoked covetousness in her 'members'. Once she believed the lie, she then desperately wanted what Satan had promised as the result of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Moreover, the way she saw the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had changed completely. It now fascinated

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her, creating a sick longing in her for the one thing that the Lord God had forbidden. The fruit looked so good for so many reasons, and she had to have it.

This is how basic and powerful the lust in our members is. We are tempted when we are drawn away from our sanctification by a desire. That desire will have an emotional focus in view. It identifies something that we want, which is attractive according to our fallen perspective. This desire precedes any act of sin. The desire is driven, or put into motion, by the intensity which our flesh attaches to it. This intensity will vary; but 'the switch that is flicked' within our hearts is the same. Once we indulge a desire of this kind, the very next step is sin.

The example of Cain is instructive in this regard. Cain was deceived with respect to the nature of his offering. He had been trained by his mother, Eve, to subdue the creation by the sweat of his brow, and thus to till the ground. This deception caused him to be invested in the success of his offering. He believed that his offering was acceptable, and that God would naturally accept it. As a result, when God in fact rejected his offering, thus thwarting Cain's initial desire to be accepted, Cain began to be assailed by the emotions of other desires and other sins. He became angry. His unclean response began to give room in his heart to the influence of unclean spirits which desired to possess Cain's soul.

Recognising Cain's condition, the Lord spoke the simple wisdom of faith to him. 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.' Gen 4:6-7.

This was a word of faith which, if Cain had received it, would have delivered him from his uncleanness. More than that, the Lord gave Cain the assurance that he could be accepted, if only he would choose in that moment to abandon the desire for personal vindication that was rising in his heart.

The Lord's words here are very instructive. When we are being drawn away by our own desires, sin is already lying at the door of our heart. Sin lies like a crouching lion, seeking to devour us. That is because sin is the spirit of Satan. Sin has a volition and an agenda. That is to say, sin has its own desire; and that desire is directed toward our destruction. Sin desires to ensnare us so that we will be caught 'like a bird in a cruel net' and will become the food upon which Satan feeds.

However, there is hope! We can rule over sin and its desire for us. Cain could have done 'well' by engaging in an open-faced fellowship with Yahweh regarding the nature of his self-deception and the faultiness of his offering. In so doing, he could have had the desire of his heart unmasked. If it had surfaced again, he could have put it off easily and continued to set his face towards the Lord. Moreover, he could have been realigned to the true works of his name, which would have brought rest and satisfaction to his troubled heart.

In this way, Cain would have acquired the wisdom needed to arrest the intensity of the emotions of sin that arose within him. He would have ceased to be at war with everyone around him. As it happened, however, Cain did none of these things, and he became enslaved to the uncleanness which resulted in him murdering his own brother. Furthermore, this wickedness of violence and vengeance multiplied to the third and fourth generations after him. Cain's great-great-grandson Lamech declared to his wives, 'Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.' Gen 4:23-24.

Returning to the Scripture in the book of James, we read that the desire in our members is *the emotion of sin*. In many forms, the emotions of sin drive every person on the planet to covet, or to envy, and to murder as did Cain.

Love or envy

As a son of God, we are either going to be motivated by love, or we will be motivated by envy. When we 'put on love', we are able to dwell in the perfect bond of unity with other sons of God. This is the unity of the Spirit. On the other hand, if we live under the motivation of envy, we will fall into the bond of iniquity. This bond will lead us to judgement if we do not find repentance from the intentions of our heart through the sprinkling of our conscience and the washing of the water of the word.

In the fellowship of Yahweh, which for sons of God is found in the fellowship of light among their brethren, the testimony is that 'the lines have fallen in pleasant places'. A son of God who rejoices in their salvation and election will be thankful for the boundaries which the Lord has drawn around them. These are the lines of sanctification which circumscribe their walk and constitute 'what is written'. This person is

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full of thanksgiving and they are known by the fruit of their lips. The coal of God's fire has cleansed their lips and they want to testify about it!

A person who refuses to join the fellowship of their brethren will do so because they *do not choose* to put on love. They resist the ministry of the Holy Spirit and retreat into the darkness of their own understanding. This means that they will be motivated by envy. An envious heart does not rejoice in the lines of sanctification which the Lord has drawn. In fact, an envious heart seeks constantly to redraw these lines in order to satisfy the lusts of their flesh.

As a result, the lusts of the flesh will be at liberty to conquer this person's heart while ever they resist the Spirit's entreaty of the word of God, 'today'. In other words, a person driven by envy will be constantly overcome by sin and uncleanness. They must receive the word with meekness for the salvation of their souls.

Satan inverts the accountability for suffering

Envy became the default of the human heart when Adam and Eve chose to believe the lie of Satan in preference to fellowship with and obedience to Yahweh at the tree of life. Satan is motivated by his envy of Yahweh, having aspired to ascend to the sides of the North and to be like the Most High, and then having been ejected from his place in the temple of God. He now has great wrath, and desires to make the sons of men 'vessels of wrath'. He distorts the *accountability* of men regarding their enmity with God, making it appear as though God is responsible for this enmity.

Satan's principal weapon in this project is the existence of suffering, which he employs as a justifiable reason for mankind to be angry with God. In other words, from this point of view, it is God's fault that suffering exists. We have seen already that Cain was snared at this same point of difficulty.

This inversion of true accountability is the distortion that wrath and envy produce in the human heart. When this distortion carries through to the body of Christ, it allows a person to become prey to the spirit of antichrist. Believing their suffering to be unjust, a person becomes filled with wrath and envy toward those whom they feel are the perpetrators of their misery. Of course, the ultimate perpetrator, from their perspective, is God Himself. Thus they become opponents of Christ, employing their sense of being a victim as the credible defence of their envious position.

This person is an enemy of the cross. An enemy of the cross is one who embodies the attitude of the thief on the cross, who railed with wrath at Christ. In order to be delivered, they must heed the words of the other thief, 'Do you not even fear God?' The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. As this person begins to fear the Lord, they will receive the wisdom from above.

'But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.' Jas 3:17-18.

The evidence that wisdom has begun to be sown into a person's heart is that they are able to *make peace*. They become 'a son of peace'. Instead of fighting the word and the messenger, they accept their culpability and come to silence. Their excuses for their bad behaviour cease and they fear the Lord. They are then able to be joined to the fellowship of the cross, which is the revelation of the wisdom of God.

Article 8

Delivered from being bewitched

Tim Maurice

Walking wisely instead of foolishly

As we now understand much more clearly, the word of God polarises its hearers to one of two extremes. Either we receive the word and become established in the kingdom as a son of God; or we reject the word proceeding from the mouth of God to go our own way. This polarisation is realised through our *choice*. We are accountable for what we do with what the Lord speaks to us through His messengers. When we choose to believe the word of God, we are wise. When we adulterate, or reinterpret, the word, we are foolish and crafty.

We have, therefore, the choice to live either as, what Paul called, 'mere men' or to be 'led by the Spirit'. 'Mere men' is a phrase employed by the apostle Paul in reference to believers who live carnally. By contrast, he wrote to the Romans that those who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God. When we are carnal, we live as mere men. When we are led by the Spirit, we live as sons of God. Sons of God walk in the wisdom of God.

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These two alternatives are the two poles which the preached word identifies when we hear it. These two polarities are described by Paul in his letter to the Galatians. In this letter, we encounter again the foolish person - or, in this case, a foolish church. From Paul's perspective, foolish people are those who allow themselves to be bewitched by Satan. With respect to this problem, Paul asked the Galatians how they had come to believe a gospel other than the gospel of sonship. The answer was that they had become carnal.

'O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?' Gal 3:1-2.

The manner in which we choose to receive the Spirit will determine whether we are walking in the Spirit or walking according to the flesh. If we receive the Spirit through the hearing of faith, it means that we are joined to, and are continuing to choose to join, the fellowship of our brethren. That is because faith works by love. The hearing of faith does not happen independently of receiving the love of God into our heart. In fact, the love of God is the ultimate source of all illumination, or enlightenment. Col 2:2. Eph 1:18. Eph 3:14-19.

The illumination of the love of God opens the doorway of faith. We *hear*, because we *love*. We can say the same thing the other way around. When we hear, by faith, the word of God proclaiming that He is Light, the eyes of our heart are illuminated and we can see what the natural eye cannot perceive. We can see Christ lifted up for us, laying down His life as an offering for our sin and iniquity. We see His body suffering because of the corrupt state of our heart. We see mercy triumphing over judgement, and we know the love of God toward us personally.

This knowledge constrains and compels us to make offering of our own body, and to despise the shame of our former separation from God because of sin. This knowledge should have led the Galatians in this way. Christ had been clearly portrayed as crucified 'before their eyes' through Paul's ministry. However, the bewitching of Satan caused their senses to become energised and excited by an alternative gospel. They were motivated to be spiritual, and to prove themselves to be spiritual, through their own actions. This is the nature of self-verification and covetousness, and it is the evidence that we are walking in craftiness. Craftiness is the mode of Satan, who also seeks to verify himself as a source of life, over and against God. This way of life is a lie which he

sows into the hearts of the sons of men in order to confound and lure them into accepting his fatherhood.

When we present ourselves to our brethren as one who is alive from the dead, we become a gift to them. When we are laying down our life in the fellowship of our brothers and sisters, we are making offering in the community of faith. This is where we learn the obedience of faith. In this context, we can receive the Spirit by hearing the word of present truth. We can also express the testimony of our faith at an agape meal, where faith works, because faith works by agape.

On the other hand, if we hear the word as a prescriptive statement of objective truth that we must keep, we will attempt to receive the Spirit by the Law. That is, we will feel provoked to perform works which verify our beliefs and make us acceptable to God and to other people. This will bring us under the power of condemnation. It will also lead to self-analysis and unbelief. We will lack the assurance that comes through faith. We will be uncertain as to how to relate in fellowship. Fearing rejection, we will either withdraw or we will attempt to summon confidence by being assertive or definitive.

The message of the gospel, when received by faith, liberates our will from its bondage to sin. This liberation enables us to serve God with a good conscience. The illumination of this wonderful truth is the testimony that we should, and will want to, bring to the agape meal. We will not come to the agape meal seeking prescriptive instruction on our obedience. We have been set free! We testify and give thanks that the Lord has visited us today with His precious word. We will not ask someone to lord it over our faith, even though there will be times when one of us says, in true humility, 'Men and brethren, what must I do?' Poverty of spirit is the mark of true testimony.

An example of a non-accountable response at an agape meal would be a young adult saying, 'I have heard today that I have not been a disciple. Tell me how to be a disciple.' Their answer is in the very nature of the question that they are asking. If they were receiving the Spirit by faith, they would know the answer. They have not been a disciple because their ears have not been opened. Their ears have not been opened because they keep turning the spiritual word of God into a law which they want to keep.

However, for a person who is hearing by faith, the wound of their repentance is also the profusion of their joy. They know that they were formerly blind to their sin, but now they are enabled to repent!

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As a result of being able to repent, they can now choose their sanctification. This joy, when expressed in the fellowship of the agape meal, makes the joy of our brethren full. The word multiplies and grows.

So why would we not live this way? The reason why we choose to continue to receive the Spirit by the works of the Law is twofold. First, it means that we do not have to be accountable. Second, it means that we can avoid the cost of our discipleship, thereby obviating the need to join the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

When we live this way, every preached word must be transmuted into some kind of sacrament or law which a person can simply 'do', without accountability or illumination. This means that if the messenger does not transform the word 'magically' into a sacrament, the hearer will feel confused and aggrieved. They will feel as though they would like to believe, but that some vital piece of information eludes them or is being withheld from them. They would prefer to have their senses excited by some outward form of success, mysticism or religiosity.

This is what Paul referred to as 'the letter'. 2Co 3:6. The letter kills, whereas the Spirit brings life. The letter kills because it prefers 'another gospel'; that is, a gospel other than the gospel of sonship. The flesh craves another gospel, because envy within our 'members' desires to perform self-verifying actions which prove that we can be like God. This is the covetousness that resides in the flesh of man. His actions must be seen to spring *from himself*. He must be the *source* of some form of righteousness. This desire is the outworking of the bewitching lie of Satan. This lie will remain in our members as long as we attempt to satisfy its demand with legal, substitutional or sacramental observance.

Instead, we must fear the Lord and accept our personal culpability, giving our ears to the word that is coming to save our soul. This is an entirely relational orientation toward the word. We do not hear it in the hope that it will inspire us to take some verifying action by which we can console the emptiness, or void, within our heart. Instead, we are fleeing the attempt to fill that void, confessing that the fullness of God is found in Christ, whose precious blood is the only consolation that we need.

In the fellowship of the blood that He shed, we receive the personal communication of faith which requires no outward observance or intellectual satisfaction. We know in whom we have believed and we are completely satisfied in Him. As the Spirit comes to our heart by faith, we rest in the assurance of our salvation which is found in the finished work of Christ's offering and sufferings.

Article 9

The cost of first love

Tim Maurice

'If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish."

Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.' Luk 14:26-35.

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An essential element of the gospel is that the love of God comes at the expense of all other loves. That is to say, when we are born again, the foundation that we lay must be the foundation of the love of God, not our own version of love. If a person refuses to hear this message, they cannot be a disciple of Christ. Their ears will never be opened to hear the word that He is speaking today, because their loyalties will be divided; and so will their house. As Jesus said, a person cannot serve two masters. They will, finally, love one above the other. The only way that we can learn to love the Lord our God is to forsake all other loves. When we do this, He is able to give back to us our other loves; but as servants to the spiritual life, not as the false masters of it.

The loves which Jesus addressed in this passage are familial. They fall into four categories: parents, spouse, children and siblings. These are the loves which operate within us at the most fundamental level of our life. They are so normal to us that we can easily take them for granted. Even when we see them at work, or celebrate them in family life, we tend not to understand how they work; nor why we should renounce their influence upon our discipleship.

'If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.' 1Pe 1:17-19.

If God really is our Father, our proper response to Him must be one of fear. As Jesus taught His disciples to pray, 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.' If we have been born from above as sons of the Father, our whole heart belongs to Him. The testimony of a new Christian is that they previously did not live this way.

"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 foremost commandment. The second is like it, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.' Mat 22:37-40.

These two commandments are very exacting, and impossibly out of our reach as ordinary people. The very idea of loving God with all of our heart, soul and mind is beyond our capacity to understand as natural men and women. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians, the comprehension of

God's love takes *illumination*. Once we are illuminated, the knowledge of His love brings other points of understanding with it.

For instance, as we see how much higher His ways are than our own, we also see how much greater His love is than ours. Love is described as a 'way' by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. A 'way' is one of the seven aspects of the word of God described in Psalm 119. From the perspective of the word, a way is something in which we walk; it is both directional and participatory in nature. We walk in a specific direction, and not in any other. We also must *apply* ourselves in order to walk; diligence to move and to keep moving is necessary.

'The most excellent way' that Paul described is the way of agape. 1Co 12:31. The most excellent way is also the fulfilment of Jesus' two great commandments. Agape is the fruit of the life of God and the evidence of the new birth, according to the apostle John. John summed up Jesus' two commandments in a single sentence: 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.' 1Jn 4:7. The evidence that we know God is that we are walking in the way of love. This love is 'first love', which is the love with which God loved us - from the first.

This love is first love because it is the basis of all other kinds of love. Unless this love, which is from God, is first in our heart, we will operate by another kind of love. More than that, we will tend not to notice that we have begun to function this way. That is why Jesus used such strong language when He instructed His disciples concerning what our attitude to familial loves should be.

The point is that we don't know how to love in our families until the love of God has broken through the depths of the selfish ambition and envy which reside 'in our members'. If we are merely applying principles, we will find that we are self-righteously attempting to love others. This is not the way of love; and nor is it first love. Love is 'of God'. It must be supplied to us daily by the Holy Spirit. Moreover, because the human loves are natural to us, until we learn to walk by the Spirit, we will not know how to do other than to be led by our natural inclinations and affections.

This is how uncleanness becomes entrenched in a household without anyone noticing it. A mother will need illumination to discern the difference between caring for her son appropriately, and being overprotective and controlling. A husband will need discernment to see

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the difference between listening to his wife 'with understanding', and simply going along with what she wants to do.

Unless we are abiding in agape, the power of the other loves will always overwhelm our flesh. That is one problem. The next problem is worse. That is when we attempt to retrofit agape over the activities that we do in obedience to these other loves. In other words, we do what we do, functioning as 'mere men'; but then, by the application of the magic word 'love', we justify to ourselves that we are being spiritual.

If we live this way, we cannot be a disciple of Jesus. Instead of abiding in His love, we are merely functioning in the same way as an unredeemed person. We are still pleasing ourselves. We are not walking in the most excellent way of Yahweh. We are adopting a religious and sacramental approach, by which we convince ourselves that attending church, praying, giving money, and so on, qualify as loving God and our brethren.

In His mercy, the Lord has come to deliver us from this error, so that we can truly love one another 'from the heart', and love the Lord with all our heart. When we abide in His love this way, all of the other loves are able to be expressed to their fullest measure - in romance, affection and friendship - without them overrunning and becoming the primary, or first, love in our lives. Agape does not destroy the other loves; it *sanctifies* them, giving them their appropriate proportion and multiplying their expression and joy.

Returning to the love of our parents, it is very important that every person comprehends the extent to which they have been redeemed from the futile ways of their forefathers. If this is not so, we will remain wedded to the practices of our parents which define what is familiar and unclean.

'A futile way' refers to a practice that is sourced in earthly wisdom. Futility was an outcome of the Fall. God subjected us to futility in the hope that we would cry out to be delivered from futile and dead works. However, if we embrace futility as an end in itself, we choose to join ourselves to the old creation which has already been judged and brought to an end by the offering of Christ. This is a choice which will bring us under the same judgement that will be applied to the whole earth at the end of the age.

Futility is referred to by Solomon as 'chasing after the wind'. It provokes frustration in the heart as a person seeks to extract ultimate meaning out of what is passing away. They find that, no sooner have they achieved

something, the evidence of it has already disappeared. This is the nature of the vain traditions of our forefathers.

The Scriptures instruct us to honour our father and mother; but they are also explicit about the judgement that will come upon those who follow in the unclean practices of their families. Our honouring of father and mother is relational, pertaining to the honouring of their unique roles in our lives, and to their individual names as sons of God. We recognise that we have received 'a package' of good and evil from our parents, which constitutes the raw material of our humanity. As brethren in Christ (if we are walking together with our parents), we are able to share with our families in the wonderful testimony of Christ's redemption from that 'raw material' (being 'mere men'), to being inheritors of a great salvation which far exceeds our natural heritage.

Counting the cost

The cost of discipleship must be counted from the very beginning of a person's conversion. The 'cost' is the giving up of our souls as our own possession. We no longer belong to ourselves. Therefore, we no longer *live* for ourselves. We give up the whole *psuche* dimension of life to the Lord, so that we can be made alive by *zoe*. *Psuche* refers to the psychological, intellectual and emotional sphere of life.

'For whoever wishes to save his life [*psuche*] will lose it, but whoever loses his life [*psuche*] for My sake, he is the one who will save it.'
Luk 9:24.

'He who loves [*phileo* - our capacity for love] his life [*psuche*] loses it, and he who hates [aligning with hating the human loves] his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.' Joh 12:24.

This is the same principle by which we give up the earthly loves, which can only function according to the standards and capacities of *psuche*. By turning from these loves as the definition of what love is, we are able to be illuminated as to the nature of the love of God. We are not living by the measurements of *psuche*.

The cost to God

Jesus gave Himself up for us, and was separated from the Father. In natural time, this separation did not endure for very long. However, in terms of the ageless experience of Yahweh, we cannot quantify the

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length, breadth, depth or height of this experience to the Lord Himself. We cannot measure the cost of what He gave up for us; nor how 'long' He had to endure the suffering that His offering journey entailed.

His sufferings separated sin from us as far as the East is from the West. This was the endless breadth of His offering, which removed the burden of sin from the old creation. When we walk as blameless participants in His offering, our sin is an infinite distance from us. It is not near to us; the Lord is near to us. We are holy and blameless in Him. When He became sin, He was removed an infinite distance from the Father, as far as the East is from the West. Moreover, the Father's face was turned from Him.

The depth of His offering was down in 'the lowest parts of the earth', to which He descended in order to bring everlasting judgement to an end. Here, the full weight of human ambition and corruption, which He embodied in Himself in that experience, reached its fullness and was put to death. This place of condemnation was the context of all darkness. Jesus was abandoned in this place, and was separated from the light of fellowship which He enjoyed with the Father. Instead of experiencing the fire of God as a place of delight and offering, He felt the full fury of the fire of God as judgement against all sin and uncleanness.

When He was raised from the death and judgement of sin, His body became the bridge between the depths of our depravity and iniquity, and the heights of God's great love for us. He walked in our ways and put them to death, so that we could be raised to walk in His ways by becoming members of His body. As we abide in Him, we are able to walk in the overcoming resurrection life that is motivated only by agape. We know agape in that He laid down His life for us.

The cost to God for our redemption is *immeasurable*. The breach in the love of God that was permitted in the Godhead, so that the Son could become sin, was beyond imagining. His ways are past finding out. Such is His love for us. As we see the cost to God for our redemption, we are invited to count the cost of our own discipleship so that we can live and walk in the most excellent way of love that Jesus has opened for us. We abide in Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.