

## The restoration of all things

It was *one of the first sermons ever* that Peter, who was freshly filled with the Holy Spirit, delivered in Jerusalem, in which he addressed the Jewish people, saying:

**“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you - even Jesus. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.”** (Acts 3:19-21 NIV)

Thereby he affirmed that Jesus Christ, Yeshua Ha'Mashiach, will *return in person* and fulfill *all* that the prophets have foretold from the beginning about *Him* and *God's coming kingdom on earth*.

(Just as *the Risen One* said in Lk 24:44 NIV: **“Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”** Compare also Rev 10,7)

That *in the forefront of this* there will be a *time of restoration*, as *Jesus Himself* had spoken to them *shortly before* about this *eschatological prophetic ministry*:

**“To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things.”** (Mt 17:11 NIV)

May we understand that it is *this, our present time* when God wants to accomplish this.

How crucial is it thereby for us to understand what it is that He *wants to* and *is about to* restore!

The significance of this restoration is certainly *much deeper and wider* than it is possible to describe in the following; it surely goes back down to *the Garden of Eden*, where the *perfect trust relationship and undiluted communion between God and man* once broke...

But *everything* is supposed to *one day become again* as it *actually should have been* from the beginning according to *His perfect, heavenly pattern*.

Jesus made it clear that *more than anything else* it is *all about* the “*kingdom of God*”, which is *to come* or *to be restored* where it had *even previously* already existed on earth *to some extent*. In Eden, but *also* for example when God had chosen *with Israel* a (both *then* and *now* - regarding the church - *very imperfect*) people and went ahead of it as “king”, redeemed it out of slavery, entered into a covenant with it and bound it together in unity; later *with David* let appear a *foreshadow of the Messiah*, who - *as king of all Israel* - defeated its enemies and laid the foundation for a following *kingdom of peace*, including a *dwelling place for God* in its midst.

Of course, all this *very soon collapsed again*, because His people kept turning away from YHWH and towards its own sinful ways, as a result of this was divided, defeated by its enemies, and lost all of its glorious position.

### The restoration of original identity and true unity among God's people

But let's look at *what specifically* is probably *more important* than anything else to Jesus in this process of restoration. It was the Lord's “last will” concerning His *entire church* (beginning with the *then believing remnant of Israel*, up to *all those who would follow Him in the future*), that which he asked His Father *more than anything else for* before His death, when He said:

**“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one - I in them and you in me - so that they may be brought to complete unity.”** (Jn 17:20-23 NIV)

It is the *unity of His Body* that Jesus desires *above all else*. ... But *what* is necessary for this?

*Becoming one* has to do with **true, humble love** and the latter with **reconciliation**. With **reversal of division**; but also with **repentance of the things that led to the split!**

Before there is no penitence and repentance of *one's own, from God detached ambitions, statutes and wrong ways*, reconciliation will not be possible, because the *foundation for it* must always be *God's Word, the truth* and the **REAL JESUS**.

On this *only salvific way of repentance*, it is hereby necessary to *go back; step by step; willing to repent*, both from *heresies* as well as from *hardhearted, judging contempt of the other*.

Not just down to the *historic reformation*, but **all the way back** to the point where the *first major division in the church* took place, which *until now* has a *tremendous impact*, as long as there is *no understanding, will and readiness to repent*, that means *turn* from the mindset that led to it. It was the *separation from our own root* that we were founded on and *should be* until today.

In the times of the first apostles it was still totally clear that *the church* is inseparably linked to *God's chosen people Israel*. Particularly *the Apostel Paul, who was first sent to the nations*, tells us that we, as **former Gentiles** (Eph 2:11), by God's grace have received the privilege of being *integrated* into the “**new covenant**” established “**with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah**” (Jer 31:31 NIV); of being *brought near* by Jesus' blood from former distance; so that we are no longer *non-citizens*, “**no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household**”. (Eph 2:19 NIV)

We thus have *not replaced* what God has begun with *His covenant people Israel*, but we are only *included*! Are “**partakers of his promise**”, “**fellowheirs, and of the same body**” (Eph 3,6 KJV), which was first and foremost *almost purely Jewish*. We have not been planted as a “new tree” but are “**built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**” *of Israel* (Eph 2:20 NIV); have only been “**grafted into**” God's *holy, never-rejected people* (Rom 11:1, Jer 31:35ff., 33:24ff.); from whom, of course, many original members have been *taken out for some time* because of their unbelief. - But *for our sake*! (Compare Rom 11:28!) “**Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.**” (Rom 11:11 NIV)

However, as a church, *from the earliest times* we have *for the most part* ignored this order to provoke the Jews to jealousy and instead *did the opposite*. From the first centuries onward we increasingly *turned away from Israel* in hatred, more and more *decisively detached* from all that was “Jewish”, in order to make ourselves an *own institution* and under Emperor Constantine finally even a (Roman) *state church*.

It went *so far* as to exclude *believing, Jesus following Jews* completely from *church councils* and *in the one of Laodicea in the year 360* even to forbid *on death penalty* to hold sacred rest on Shabbat, that is to continue following *one of the ten commandments*!

We increasingly established our own orders and broke away fundamentally from *God's order given to His people*, including *His appointed times*. It was a shift (motivated by *spiritual jealousy* and hence *anger towards everything that appeared Jewish*), away from *Israel*, towards mingling with *own traditions* and *pagan cults*. Away from the original *organic body* that Jesus had brought into being, in which *HE* reigned through the Holy Spirit, towards an *institution* shaped by own rule and control, own standards and ways. Full of regulations and commandments based on own human wisdom; a worldly oriented hierarchy that had replaced a praying, purely Holy Spirit-dependent (*serving* instead of *top-down ruling*) leadership.

We built our own religious kingdom/work/church/denomination in the *spirit of Babylon*, and then experienced how *we too* were divided and split in a similar way, whereby *to this day* each group/denomination speaks “its own language”.

*His own Word*, which He had revealed through the prophets, was degraded to a *merely symbolic, edifying literature* for oneself personally, and no longer considered to be a description of an *actually coming reality*, a factual depiction foreshadowing *God's kingdom on earth*.

The then emerging **replacement theology** says that the Church would have replaced Israel (the *curses* would still *literally* apply to the descendants of Jacob, but *not the promises of blessing*, which from now on were to be considered only *purely symbolic* for the Church). Incredibly, this *arrogant distortion of God's statements*, down to the present day, is *the norm in thought, preaching, and general understanding of Scripture* in great parts of the church; although His word could hardly stand *more clearly against it*. (Compare Rom 11:1, Jer 31:35ff., 33:24ff.)

We thus *did exactly* what Paul had previously warned *explicitly the church of Rome* about, when he wrote to it: “**If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. (...) Do not be arrogant, but tremble.**” (Rom 11:17-20 NIV)

Instead of *gratefully accepting in humility* that we have been *taken in, grafted in*, we took away from the Jews their *divinely ordained share and place in the plan of their own God* and robbed it solely for ourselves and our own *religion*, that *itself* was already so far removed from His Word and Himself in various aspects.

*Exactly contrary* to the order “**prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. (...) Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your Savior comes!’**” (Isa 62:10f. NIV), *instead*, we even put *more and more* obstacles in their way. Instead of causing jealousy in them and drawing them to their Messiah *by our love*, through *our contemptuous, accusatory and hostile attitude* we rather gave them the impression that Jesus was their *enemy* and *cut off* for them *every way to Him* apart from *our own religious system* full of man-made traditions and rules.

At some times did not only *allow* unbelievable atrocities against them, but *promoted them ourselves*. Completely despised God's love for His people and the fact that we “**owe (...) to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them...**” (Romans 15:27 NIV)

We did not acknowledge *our root through which we had received all blessings*, but hacked at it; robbed its identity *partly for us and partly cut off from it* what did not fit into *our own image (of God, Jesus, His people and His larger plan)* at our own convenience.

Totally despising that *only through the eternally chosen people of Israel* we have *the entire Bible*, not only the *patriarchs and prophets*, but also the *apostles, evangelists*, and above all *Jesus Himself, the King of the Jews*. Instead of expressing *gratitude, service out of love, help and comfort*, we rather treated *His beloved people* with *arrogance, contempt, cold indifference, and accusation* for so long. - And unfortunately, in many cases *do so until today*; because we are not influenced by *God's Word and Spirit*, but by the *spirit of this world and its view on things!* (Which is dominated by the “*accuser*” who hates *God's people and His kingdom-purposes* which are inseparably linked to them; since *as a consequence thereof* he himself will be taken from this earth!)

However, *the healing of the body of Christ* is possible *only through penitence and repentance*, no matter *how long ago* it is already where a wrong path has been taken and *how old* the following *misguiding doctrines, ways of thinking, and systems* already are.

It is only possible by a *change of thinking*, away from *church tradition founded on an unbiblical foundation*, towards the *Word of God, His unchanging plan, His determinations and standards*.

By making us - *even corporately as a body* -, *like the foreigner Rut*, one with those to whom we have been joined, in a loving, loyal, ministering manner; to prepare - *like her as David's grandmother* - the way for Messiah's coming and dominion. (Compare Isa 40: 1-5)

For *HE comes back from heaven to stay and to reign for a thousand years on this earth*. (Compare Acts 1:10f., Rev 20)

This *absolutely central - often so neglected - truth* is so important to Jesus that He even promises: “**if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.”**” (Rev 22:19f.)

YHWH, our God, has chosen *Israel* - and especially *Jerusalem* - from the beginning of His *plan of salvation*, with the firm, unalterable purpose of *making it His special dwelling and resting-place on earth*. (Compare Ps 132:13f. NIV: “**For the Lord has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his dwelling, saying, “This is my resting place for ever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it.”**”, Ps 2:6 NIV: “**I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.**”, Zech 2:10-12 NIV: “**“Shout and be glad, Daughter Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,” declares the Lord. “Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become my people. I will live among you (...) The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem.**”, Jer 3:17 NIV: “**At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the Lord, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts.**”, Ezek 43:6f. NIV: “**I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple. He said: “Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever.”**”,

Ezek 37:28 NIV: **“Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.”**, Isa. 60f., 62:1-7, Joel 4:20f., Zech 8:22f., 14:1-9; ...)

*David's throne in Jerusalem was just a tiny little hint of Yeshua's eternal reign on it, even very concretely already in the millennial kingdom; and then finally at the absolute completion of it all and eternal unification of heaven and earth in the “New Jerusalem” descending from heaven. (See Rev 21f.) At this, by the way, the names of the twelve tribes of **Israel** are written on the gates of this eternally remaining city, into which also we as the fullness of the nations (comp. Gen 48:19, Rom 11:25) are called to enter at some point (through one of these!). What all clarifies the eternal importance of Israel, whereby it was God's intention from the beginning to eventually give people from all tribes and nations equally a share in it. (Confer Gen 22:17f., Rev 5:9f.)*

It shows the foresight, wisdom, and faithfulness of God, Who makes **“known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come.**

**I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’”** (Isa 46:10 NIV)

Israel was, is and will forever be His people, what will be made obvious in the end. The nations **“will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them and that they, the Israelites, are my people, declares the Sovereign Lord. You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God...”** (Ez 34:30f. NIV)

Thereby Yeshua, as the good shepherd, currently gathers all over the world His **“other sheep that are not of this sheep pen”**, in order to **“bring them also”** (Jn 10:16), that means to *integrate* them (the Gentile believers) into the *original herd*, which points to the *believing Jews*, and at last make them *one with it*; then **“there shall be one flock” only, holy, reconciled and faithful to Him, “and one shepherd.”** (Jn 10:16 NIV) - Yeshua, the **“King of Israel”**. (Jn 1:49, 12:13 NIV)

How much we, as believers from the nations, are part of this “Israel of God”, becomes already apparent when Jacob accepts (the half-Egyptian son of Joseph - whose name already means: “YHWH adds”) Ephraim like one of his physical sons, that means “adopts” him (see Gen. 48:5) - as Yeshua does us -, and prophecies over him, **“his seed shall become a multitude of nations”** (Gen 48:19 KJV), literally “Melo HaGojm”, “the fullness of the (actually Gentile) nations”; that is the same expression that Paul uses in Rom 11:25 KJV, when he says, **“blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”**

Likewise, the same apostle refers passages that speak literally of the “house of Israel”, more precisely the ten tribes of the northern kingdom (Hos 1:6-9, Ps 78:67-69), who once fell away from Judah, were expelled and scattered all over the world already some time before the Jews were, and - unlike them - merged pretty much completely with the other peoples, to the **non-Jewish believers in general**: **“even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? As he says in Hosea: “I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,” and, “In the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’ ””** (Rom 9, 24-26 ELEV)

In the original quote, however, Hosea literally speaks (separately from the “house of Judah”) of the “house of Israel”, consisting of the ten (only apparently!) “lost” northern tribes, in which Joseph's son Ephraim plays a leading role:

**“Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘children of the living God.’**

**The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land...”** (Hos 1:10f. NIV)

This is a promise that the two parts that Paul here above refers to as the Jewish and the non-Jewish believers (that are not all natural, but very well spiritual decedents of Israel!), will once again come together under one king Who clearly points to Yeshua.

In the same way it is said in *another eschatological promise*:

**“Son of man, take a stick of wood and write on it, ‘Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him.’ Then take another stick of wood, and write on it, ‘Belonging to Joseph (that is, to Ephraim) and all the Israelites associated with him.’ Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand. (...) ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph - which is in Ephraim’s hand - and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah’s stick. I will make them into a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand.’ (...) I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. “ ‘My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and their children’s children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. (...) My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.’” (Ez. 37:16-28 NIV)**

At the latest in the “*New Jerusalem*” there will *actually take place* this complete gathering and union of *all God’s saints*. But - *whatever that may look like specifically* - even already in the Thousand-Year-Kingdom, a gathering is promised, literally in the Land of Israel, for those of His people who will have the privilege of being present there in this time. (Compare Rev 20: 6,9)

Although His saints will inherit *the whole earth* and rule in *all nations*! (Cf. Dan 7:18,27; Rev 5:9f.)

But whatever things may *look like concretely* during that time, in any case, *out of these Bible passages* (that *partly even in the New Testament* refer to us), it becomes clear that *the church* is not *anything detached from Israel*! (Even the New Testament word “*Ecclesia*” is an expression that in *Hebrew translation* is found many times in the Old Testament, referring to the believing “**congregation**” (Lev 10:17 KJV) of Israel, “**the Lord’s community**” (Num. 20:4 NIV ), etc.)

This *togetherness* was already *totally clear* in the early days of the church, whereby there was even the debate on whether all believers would have to be *circumcised*. But the Holy Spirit made it clear to the apostles that this is expressly *not necessary*, since the New Covenant is about a *different, more profound circumcision*; that *in general* it is appropriate not to impose *all the outward rules* on the Gentile believers, since they will hear *the essential things of God’s Word* later anyway regularly in the service: **“...write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.”** (Acts 15:20f. NIV)

Concerning the *law* (as well as many of the *purely external rules and mere foreshadows* of the much more decisive *coming things* contained in it), he made it clear *what really matters*:

**“Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commands is what counts.”** (1Cor 7:19) **“God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them (the Gentiles!) by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”** (Acts 15:8-11)

So he affirms that it is about “*salvation by faith*” as well as “*keeping the commandments of God*” *out of the profound inward change through the Holy Spirit*, Who guides us in the right way. So that *through Him* we may **concretely do** what God *leads us to do* out of the vivid relationship with Him; which basically, however, will be *in complete harmony* with what *His Word* says and what particularly Jesus emphasized once more and strengthened in His preaching.

**“He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant - not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”**(2Cor 3:6 NIV)

Whereby we use the Word of God *as a basis and standard*, even in *those points* we didn't have on the screen up to now. While we're still relying solely on *The One Who has saved us undeservedly and continues to lead us in His path of salvation*. So that we, like Paul, do *everything we can* to know more than anything else *the Messiah Himself* and - *through continual adoration, prayer, thanksgiving, but also faithfulness to His instruction* - are constantly found in Him. Knowing I'm **“not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.”** (Phil 3:9 NIV)

2,000 years ago God opened a wide door to bring His **“children (...) scattered abroad”** back to Him and to **“gather (them) together in one”**. (Jn 11:52 KJV) - Understood *both spiritually and literally*, when He will soon set up His Kingdom on this earth in a powerful way *through His returning Son*. May we, *at least in essence*, understand that in this *most important time of preparation for that, in which we are currently in*, a major point is *to come back to the identity that we were supposed to have from the beginning and will have forever*. Not at all by entering into another religious system, but by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us back to our roots, whereby *reconciliation, healing (even of our communal identity) and strengthening of the whole body of Christ, the Messiah*, can happen. Restoration of what we *should never have detached from* according to God's will; what *should never have been broken*.

After the Risen Lord had appeared to His disciples *for 40 days* and had taught them about the “Kingdom of God”, it was *one question* that finally burned on their hearts:

**“Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?””** (Acts 1:6 NIV)

It was *exactly the question about the fulfillment of all God's promises of salvation for Israel given in the scriptures*, which Jesus *did not dismiss* in any way thereupon, but merely *made clear* regarding it that *first of all* *still something else* was necessary to take place, before this will happen:

**“He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”** (Acts 1:7f. NIV)

So, *all that was promised from the beginning* will happen, and we *who bring ourselves in alignment with God's intentions, who are solidly grafted into His olive tree and truly do what He tells us to* (Jn 14:21), are *deeply integrated* in it and *share* in it!

We belong to His people since we belong to Messiah, *Who, shortly before His death, referred the following passage to Himself and His own return* (cf. Mt 26:64), in which it is told about Him:

**“There before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. (...) But the court will sit, and his (the evil, antichrist king's) power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.”** (Dan 7: 13f; 26f. NIV)

What still stands in the way of this glorious goal, to which God also calls *us*, is perhaps not even first and foremost *the external, worldly circumstances*, but rather *the outstanding fullness, maturity, and unity of His Bride*, for which Jesus is waiting! *Our hearts* that He wants to prepare for these coming, unfathomable great things. By growing **“to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.”**(Eph 4:15 NIV), while *every limb in His body* takes its destined place; by serving each other and building ourselves up in love as a spiritual organism.

Whereby it is *not* about our “own religious kingdom”, but about “His”! In which *not* we determine in our own, carnal way, but *He*. While we - *in total dependency upon Him in the humble place of prayer, intimate fellowship with Him and reading His Word* - constantly receive *His mind and will* and *act on it* out of trust and love.

## The restoration of freedom from the idols of “ego” and “mammon”

It is *relationship* which is always the *most important matter* to God; which *has to be right* first of all. Both *with Him* and *with each other*. The more we grasp God's love and *His gift of grace*, it will *inevitably follow* that we also open *our hearts, our possessions, and even our homes* both to *Him* and to *our brothers and sisters*. So that, *as in the early church, lively house churches* increasingly afresh replace the *inactive entertainment mentality* in the *conventional churches*.

By which, again, Christianity is *lived and experienced* in everyday communion, rather than being limited primarily to “sterile” Sunday worship services; we are thus challenged to become active *ourselves*, to walk in spiritual gifts, to mature in them and to be refined in our character.

While we allow God *in general* to enter *all areas of our lives*, no “idol” is left that we withhold from Him; *the love* is truly lived and can flow freely, so that it becomes a testimony to those who hunger for it. *As the mind of the kingdom of God*, where everything revolves around *a pure heart shaped by His Holiness*, around *free giving and receiving*, but also *listening to God, discipline and obedience*, more and more devolves into our DNA; because we let *Jesus* fill us and reign over us and no longer *our ‘self’, our pride, the carnal thinking and willing, or the mammon*.

So that *even we in this present, last, pre-tribulation time*, can increasingly live like *the first disciples* who **“were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.”** (Acts 4:32 NIV)

It is about a restoration of what is *the beginning, the center, and the goal of God's kingdom*, namely, *that He rules; especially in us!* By following Jesus in *not seeking our own will, but that of the Father*. Only if we deny ourselves and accept the yoke of *His dominion over us* we, as the Body of Christ, can live in our calling.

If *even the Son* says, He **“can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. (...) For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.”** (Jn 5:19, 6,38 NIV), *how much less* can we accomplish anything *truly enduring* without following Him in this *crucial step*?

God certainly also rewards *risk* sometimes, by courageously and shrewdly dealing with the talents given to us (cf. Mt 25:14ff.), but *at the same time* it is essential for us to completely subordinate our ways to Him *in general*, to entirely entrust ourselves to Him daily, *just as Jesus did*, and to seek His instruction in everything.

Again, *the foundation for this* is that there is no longer *any pride* in us, that we no longer hold fast to *our own control* over our lives, our property, our church, our ministry, etc., but put HIM above everything, entrust ourselves to Him completely, and trust Him (cf. Ps 37.5); that we do not consider ourselves wise, but fear YHWH and shun *everything that is evil before Him*. (cf. Prov 3:7)

We thus become *like Him* **“gentle and humble in heart”** (Mt 11:29 NIV), increasingly *look and “smell” like Yeshua*, and not like *those who from the viewpoint of the world are acknowledged, highly praised and all too often full of the pride of life*. (Cf. 1Jn 2:16) We are *holy* as *He* is holy. (1Pet 1:16, 1Thess 4:3, Hebr 12, ...) Live in true humility by doing only what we see Him doing; out of *His Spirit*.

We offer *ourselves* with body and soul **“as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.”** (Rom 12:1f. NIV)

May the Father lead us back *in everything* to His *original model* and thereby allow *fundamental healing* to happen. In the *great picture and general understanding of His plan that is soon coming to perfection, which is so crucial for our identity*; as well as *in the small things*, when it comes to our *eternally significant* living together in Yeshua's body.