

WORKGROUP



BACK TO THE BIBLE

Walking Worthy (chapter 18)

In the Book of Joshua we see Joshua as an image of Christ. Joshua who puts up two memorials, in verse 9 in the middle of the River Jordan, and in verse 20 across the River Jordan. On the one side we see the memorial of the old man in the River Jordan (*which is not to be found anymore*) and on the other side the memorial of the new man, the meaning of Christ's resurrection, across the River Jordan. We have exhaustively spoken about these things.

We ourselves must time and again bear that memorial in mind. And especially the memorial built across the River Jordan. That is a memorial for good reason. That is what it clearly reads, that it is a memorial, in verse 7:

-And these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." (Jos.4:7).

A memorial for Israel. But it can be a memorial for us too. A memorial pointing to what Christ has done for Israel, and will do in the future, and at the same time a memorial which He is forming from the stones set apart, that is His Body! And in one way or another we need that in our lives. A memorial. That you repeatedly, now and again, walk by it, along the bank of the River Jordan, and that you are reminded of the meaning of Christ's resurrection. We need repetition in our lives. We also need the children, our children and our grandchildren say to us: "Now, what is the meaning of Christ's death and Christ's

resurrection, of His cross and His resurrection, what is the meaning of that?"

And "What is the meaning of Canaan? It is good for us to be able to answer the questions that the children have. And by that I mean children in faith as well. And for us it is a memorial too, for as believers we are often pig-headed. And if I keep to myself, I can write about it in my own life, but to really stick to it in the spiritual things, and keep on drawing from that, and remain in the spiritual walk of faith, **aware** that my old man stayed behind in the River Jordan, and that I through grace can walk in newness with Christ, and that I yet live, armed, with the members of my body armed, than I must return to the Word time and again, to realise again and again that I can stand firm with Him! That I can stand in His service, can be a servant, a doulos, can be a slave. And if you are not careful, then in daily life you forget it, with all that fuss around you of worries at work and everything that goes on in the world, all kind of worries for your possessions, vacation and so on.

Before you know it you forget it, and as believer you need to gather with other believers, open the Bible and say: Yes, that is what it is all about. It is a memorial for ever. That keeps you reminding.

It have been tremendous miracles, the Lord did there for Israel. Miracles that have a lot to tell us, and of which we can learn. And you would think that a people as Israel if such great miracles happen to you, that you will never forget it. But the people did forget. As we can read in the Book of Psalms:

- "They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had showed them. (Ps 78:10-11).

That is what you read in Ps.78:11, that they did forget. Yes, we all are forgetful. And especially in the spiritual things we are forgetful. And you must hear it often time and again, and then you think "yes, that is what it is all about." And you feel confidence again, confidence in faith. And you go and stand again as a fighter for the Lord.

The Number Ten

And to do all that, that is our personal responsibility. And that personal responsibility we also find in the Book of Joshua. When you read in Jos.4:19, you read when this all happened. When was that crossing of the River Jordan?

- "And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal."

So it happened on **the tenth** of the first month. That is quite special, it did not happen on the fourth of the month, the fifth of the month, or the sixth of the month, no, on the tenth of the first month. And what is always represented by the number 10 in the Bible? The number 10 in the Bible is always an image of the human responsibility. That is why we have how many fingers? We do have **ten**. How many toes? We do have **ten**. Your **behaviour** is your own responsibility. What you do with you hands, how you behave. That is the number **ten**.

We may consider the number 10 in the Bible as one of the perfect numbers, it is typical for God's perfection and organization. Thus speaks Genesis 1 about the work of God in six days. In that passage we read **10 times**: "And God said...". That is how the (ten) words of God underlie His work to create heaven and earth as a home for man.

From humanity God chose one people as His own: Israel. With that people He concluded an alliance (Ex. 19) and gave them **Ten** words, which underlie His work **with** and **through** the people of Israel. Moses later says: "And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them on two tables of stone. (Deut. 4:13).

The **Ten** commandments are divided in two times five. The first five Commandments concern serving God; the second series of five are about the relationship with the neighbour. In fact it is all about **human behaviour**, about personal responsibility.

That is why it is very nice to find this again in Matthew 22, where a biblical scholar ask what the greatest commandment in the law is. Then the Lord Jesus answers:

- “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. (*the first five commandments*). And the second is like to it, **You shall** love your neighbor as yourself. (*the second five commandments*). On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (vs. 37-40).

The motto of the **Ten** Words is obvious: love! Love for God and the neighbour. In the innermost that is the same, for God has shown Himself the **Neighbour** of the Israelites in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why these two commandments are actually the same.

So in the Word, we find the description “10th of the month”. This day is very important for Israel with respect to the Passover. On the **tenth day** of the first month (Nisan) the sacrificial animal for Passover had to be brought home.

And we have seen that the people of Israel entered the promised land headed by Joshua on the **10th** of the first month:

- “And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.” (Jos.4:19)

It was exactly on the tenth of the first month that the people came up out of the River Jordan, and they encamped in Gilgal. Yes, that was their responsibility.

It is our responsibility to move up, to come out of the River Jordan and stand in the newness of life, to claim that for yourself. No one else can do that for you. You must do it yourself.

Yet that crossing of the river Jordan is very important in the Bible, given the great attention

the Word pays to it. Entire chapter 3 is about it, as well as chapter 4, and actually a part of chapter 5, because this explains what happened in Gilgal. And we know what happened in Gilgal. There a circumcision of the flesh took place. Well, that is quite special, the own flesh was taken away just like that. Yes, that is the image of the flesh, our human flesh, the old flesh, the old man, that is what they were circumcised of. That was Gilgal, chapter 5.

Why would the Scripture discuss this so extensively? Because it is so very important, that is why in the Scripture so many attention is paid to the crossing of the River Jordan. It is crucial to the life of a believer to really cross the River Jordan. For only then, when you are able to see that meaning, not only of the cross of Christ, but of Christ's resurrection too, only then the Israelites are able to take in Canaan. And if we get of understand those meanings, we can walk in our heavenly Canaan in a spiritual sense as well, and claim those spiritual blessings one by one.

But before we can really start walking, something has to happen in our personal lives, and that is what the continuation of the Book Joshua teaches us, and that is why we are going to read in Joshua 5. And to gain a good view we read the entire chapter:

"And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that **their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more**, because of the children of Israel. 2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, Make you sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. 3 And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. 4 And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. 5 Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had **not circumcised**. 6 For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: to whom the LORD swore that he would not show them the land, which the LORD swore to their fathers that he would give us, a land that flows with milk and honey. 7 And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. 8 And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp, till they **were whole**. 9 And the LORD said to Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Why the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day. 10 And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. 11 And they

did eat of the **old corn of the land** on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. 12 And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. 13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went to him, and said to him, Are you for us, or for our adversaries? 14 And he said, No; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said to him, What said my Lord to his servant? 15 And the captain of the LORD's host said to Joshua, Loose your shoe from off your foot; for the place where on you stand is holy. And Joshua did so." (Joz 5:1-15).

That must have been quite an experience for Joshua, that he thus met the Lord, and the place wher he stood turned out to be holy. Moses before had experience such a thing.

Yes, we have reached chapter 5. And it is quite special that this story of Joshua is stuck in between Joshua 4 and Joshua 6.

In Joshua 4 we have seen that entire crossing of the River Jordan. That standing clear of the water of the River Jordan with those two memorials. One memorial in that death-Jordan and one memorial on the bank. And we have seen that this is an image of the old man which we leave in the death-river as we become one with Christ. And with Christ we cross to the other bank through His death. We die with Him, we are being crucified with Him, we cross that death-Jordan.

We are burried with Him in death, but we rise so to say, we are being revived, we are made living again, and we stand on the other bank as new men. We are revived with Him. We are resurrected with Him, and, as Ephesians tells us, we are put with Him in the heavenly quarters.

And exactly that represents the whole crossing of the River Jordan, that death-Jordan. And then you actually think, if you see it symbolical like this, yes, then we are ready, for we are

new men, and then, of course, we are ready to start the battle for the land Canaan. Then we are ready to fight that heavenly battle in the heavenly quarters. For we are placed there with Christ, we have been revived and we are placed with Him in the heavenly quarters, and we are armed with Him, and we can start the fight, not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual evil in the heavenly quarters. Yet this is not the case. It is not ready yet.

Actually, from chapter 4 you could continue the story in chapter 6, where you will read about Jericho, and everything that happened there, that whole battle around Jericho. Because if we did so (skip chapter 5) we would miss nothing of the whole story. But brothers and sisters, it is not for nothing that chapter 5 was placed exactly in between these two chapters. Exactly that is very important.

For we might think that we have experienced about everything, we are taught now from Scripture that we are crucified with Christ, have died with Christ and that our old man, our old live now remains in the death-Jordan and that we have crossed the death-Jordan with Christ and that we now stand on the other bank, and that we have become new men, and we see those two memorials. Of the first nothing is visible anymore since the death-Jordan flows over it, that old life, nothing is to discover of that, and you may know, I have become a new man in the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet it is the case, that that is not enough.

It is not enough, that you know all these things in theory. A lot more must happen in the practice of our lives, before we can actually start that spiritual battle in the heavenly quarters.

Joshua 5 starts telling us in the first verse, that all those Amorite kings on the westbank of the River Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites by the sea, they heard of this tremendous miracle of God, and yes, it says in the end: "Their heart melted."

- **"their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more**, because of the children of Israel. (Jos 5:1)

Personally, I think that we can spiritually translate this to the here and now. It is not in so many words in the Bible, but I think that we can state, based on the Word, that it might be true, that the hearts of the spiritual villains in the heavenly quarters melted too. For the Lord Jesus Christ did not only die on Golgotha's cross, but He actually rose on the third day, and after that went to heaven. As Victor He went through the heavens. And those spiritual villains in the sky have seen Him go through the heavens as Victor. And as explained to us in Col.2, He was very victorious, because no one was able to prevent Jesus' Ascension. He took place on the Father's right hand. And it says too, that He publically triumphed over them (over those spiritual villains), that He publically exhibited them, and that He exposed them. And they have realized, including Satan, that it is in fact a matter of time before they will be defeated forever!

The Amorites knew this, the Canaanites knew, those kings knew, and those spiritual villains in the heavenly quarters know it without doubt. And you see that these kings look that way to these Israelites. They had lost courage because of the Israelites. And I think in spiritual sense too, if you look at the spiritual battle in Ephesians 6, that it is the same for us, although we do not always realize it, but if you carry that further, that it is the case, that actually those spiritual villains know, if they look at us, and what God has for us in His plan of ages, in His intention of ages, that we are more than victorious.

We are invincible, brothers and sisters! Because we do not stand there in our own strength. But because we go forth in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ, our Lord! And death could not hold Him, and they could not prevent Him from taking seat at God's right hand in the heavenly quarters. They can neither prevent that we, members of His body, placed with Jesus in the heavenly quarters, revived, and actually a spiritual force together, the Body of Christ, that will wage war in the future in His name, with a tremendous testimony to all governments, powers and forces in the heavenly quarters.

Yes, it says in James 2:19 that the demons know God too. And what is added? That they tremble. There is a tremor, then a tremor will go through creation. It is so obvious in the First Letter to the Corinthians, that if they had known everything before, those evil forces of this creation, if they had known what would happen when they crucified Christ, they had never crucified Him. But they did anyhow. Actually, they did exactly what would become our salvation, and what would mean salvation to all creation. That is the peculiarity, the depth in it.

But despite that it is the case, that the hearts of the people living in Canaan melted, you could say, well then the Israelites could go to Jericho at once? Directly go into confrontation? For these people are all afraid of the Israelites? Those people will run immediately as the Israelites approach. They know they will be defeated. But no, that is not the case. Because what must happen? Actually two important things happen to the Israelites, here in chapter 5. And thus actually two things have to happen to us too. Actually these are two conditions to lead a victorious life. And these two things must happen before Israel can join the battle. And these two things must happen to us too, before we can really join the battle in Christ.

There we will continue next time.

Walking Worthy (chapter 19)

Circumcision

Last time, we read entire Joshua 5. And we ended with the conclusion that two more things have to happen first before Israel could really enter into the battle in the promised land. In the same way these things have to happen in our lives to be able to really stand in a victorious life. If we really want to experience a victorious life in our religious life, those two things, mentioned in Joshua 5, have to happen to us too. Yes, we must personally claim these things, so they become our own. Now, what are these two things? Well **the first** is, what is the command in Jos.5:2:

- "At that time the LORD said to Joshua, Make you sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time."

That is the first thing that must happen. You have to be circumcised, yes with a circumcision, says Paul in Col.2, which is a circumcision without hands. No, not that circumcision, but you have to be circumcised. That is what we will give a thought, what that implies, to experience a circumcision, without hands, but through God's hands. Not a circumcision, as Israel literally experienced in their flesh, that everyone of the male sex lost their foreskin.

- "And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins."

Yes, they all lost their foreskin on that hill Gilgal. It were over 600,000 militant men who had crossed, who were circumcised. But we do not have to be circumcised on our foreskins, we are circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, a circumcision without hands. It is a circumcision, as the Bible then says: A circumcision of the heart. And that is what it is about here. **That is the first important thing** that must happen.

And that is the **practical** circumcision in our lives. It should not be only **theoretical**. Like: I am crucified with Christ, and I am buried with Him, I died with Him, and I was revived with Him, and I was placed with Him in the heavenly quarters. That that is only theoretical. No, it has to be followed by quite a lot. That is that you put off your old man, literally in practice, that you put off your old flesh, and that you put on the new man in the daily practice of your life. And that is what it is about in the whole Letter to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and to the Philippians. Whole chapters are spender on what that "circumcision" means in the practice of everyday's life. That you put off your old man and put on your new man. And that is what this is about. That is what it is about here, this is what they are experiencing.

Unusual is that in verse 2 is added:

- "Make you sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time."

It is something happening for the second time here, and that is a bit exceptional, since that "the second time" is repeated over and over again in this chapter. Of course the Israelites were already circumcised in Egypt. That whole generation that went out of Egypt then, that experienced the exodus, and that slaughtered that lamb in that night, and brushed the blood of the lamb on the doorposts, and that ate of the roasted lamb, that celebrated that Passover for the first time, that very first Passover celebration that you can find in the Bible. And not just anyone could celebrate that Passover, for something special is written in Ex.12 where it is about the Passover and the exodus from Egypt:

- "And when a stranger shall sojourn with you, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is home born, and to the stranger that sojournes among you."(Ex 12:48-49).

What does that imply? Though you read nowhere in these chapters about the circumcision of the Israelites, they knew when they were allowed to celebrate that Passover with each other. **When you were circumcised!** That is clearly described at the end of verse 48: But no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. Then you were not allowed to eat of it.

In Egypt they were all circumcised, there that first circumcision took place, that was linked to that celebration, that first celebration and the establishment of that Passover. No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. And when you read in Joshua 5, you read the reason, why they were circumcised the second time:

"And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised." (Jos 5:4-5).

Yes, they were all circumcised before that exodus took place, before they had joined that Passover, and had eaten of that Passover, before they had experienced that salvation. But after that time the Israelites were not circumcised anymore, and had not celebrated the Passover anymore.....!

In fact it is the case, if we in our personal lives in spiritual sense, in typological sense experience the exodus from Egypt, from this world, that we describe the blood of Christ, of His cross, and His death on the cross, that He delivered us from our sins, and that you get to know your Saviour, and you receive Him personally as the Christ, your Saviour, and you take that step in faith, then that is actually the first step in faith you take. And the next step will follow, you break with your old life and with sin in your life. Your life will change. "What a change God made to my life, since Jesus lives in my heart", as a Dutch song says.

Then an enormous change will take place in your life. However, what is a symptom? Let me keep it to myself. When I personally, many years ago, got to know the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, did I have any knowledge, that I died with Him and that I was crucified with Him and buried with Him, and revived with Him, resurrected, and put in the heavenly quarters, in a heavenly Canaan?

No, not at all. I did not know anything about that. And the Israelites here too, they had all experienced the exodus. The exodus from Egypt. They were freed from Pharaoh's power. And in the same way you experience in your life that you are freed from the power, actually freed from the power of the evil one, and that you are rescued, that you are sent off. And you know that heaven is somewhere in expectation, and the Israelites knew it too.

Yes the Lord will lead us to a Canaan. But that you can go in there in spiritual sense right here and now, I did not know earlier.

You should not expect that from a new-believer, a nursing child in faith, a baby in faith, someone who is young in faith, or whatever you would like to call it. That is never preached in the proclamation of the Gospel, and that is not possible too. That is a message you cannot bring to the world, that is a message you can only bring to believers.

Believers, who suddenly find out that the spiritual life, the religious life is quite heavy, because you enter a desert under a burning sun. You have to deal with the fact that you need the water of life over and over again, you need food time and again, you need manna all the time, and that manna must come every time. And the Lord gives that too. And you need that milk from God's Word over and over again, for if you are still a nursing child, you drink of that all the time.

The Passover

This manna, can it keep you alive? Yes, it can keep you alive. But is it solid food? No, it is not, it is not cheese sandwiches. It is not potatoes with meat and vegetables. In fact sometime something else, solid food, had to replace it. There had to come an end to the manna, and it happened in Joshua 5, there Israel could live of the crops from the land. During the whole journey through the desert the manna was there every day, until they reached Canaan and celebrated the Passover together.

And what is so important and beautiful, brothers and sisters, they suddenly get to celebrate Passover. For the last time we dealt with that tenth of the first month. That was the day Israel had to fetch the Passover, and that Passover had to be kept until the fourteenth of the month, when it had to be slaughtered in the evening twilight. And that tenth of the first month was the day Israel reached the other side of the River Jordan. But before they could celebrate Passover, they had to be circumcised.

They entered that land, that promised land, and then you read that you not only have to be circumcised on the foreskin, but they celebrated Passover afterwards. They celebrated it for the first time when they left Egypt, and they celebrated it as a memorial feast once, namely

that time together with Moses as you can read in the Book of Numbers.

And then you might think, they celebrated it every year, but that is not true, for all the time they wandered in the desert, for 40 years, they never celebrated it again.

Despite the clear command the Lord had given:

- “And **this day shall be to you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the LORD** throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast **by an ordinance for ever**. Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; even the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And you shall **observe the feast of unleavened bread**; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall you observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.”(Ex 12:14-17).

The first time they celebrated it again was here on the bank, the other side of the River Jordan, there they celebrated it, after they were circumcised, circumcised for the second time, and so you could say: Celebrated the memorial feast for the second time. The “original” feast they celebrated in Egypt and when they just went out and arrived in the desert, they celebrated it for the second time, and they celebrated it for the third time here on the bank of the River Jordan. In fact, the second time they celebrated it here as a memorial feast.

And that is what happened to us to, brothers and sisters, because when you **grow** in faith, and learn to understand and accept the late letters of Paul, then the cross gets its deeper meaning through the preaching, a much deeper meaning. Then it does not just have the meaning that the Lord Jesus shed His blood there for us, as our Saviour, for our sins, and that we are forgiven, and that our sins are reconciled, etc, but then it gets a much deeper, higher meaning: Then we suddenly get to understand that we are **crucified with Him**, buried, and died, and **revived with Him, resurrected with Him** and **placed with Him** in the heavenly quarters. That we became one with Him, that we are one in His resurrection.

That is so special, and then you go and look once again, then you go and experience once

again, that cross, the meaning of that cross in your life. That meaning here, where they dwelt upon to celebrate Passover. But they can only celebrate it after "Gilgal" where they were circumcised. They celebrate it at Gilgal. That place is called Gilgal. That is what it says too:

- "And the LORD said to Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Why the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day. And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of **the old corn of the land** on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year."(Jos 5:9-12).

They celebrated it there, the Passover. They had a renewed look at the cross. And that is where we can end up in our lives, that we have a renewed look at the cross and the meaning of the cross in our lives, and that we deal with that. And how do we deal with that? Well, in the most practical sense.

For it is no use if it is only a dogmatic piece, some kind of "dogma", no, then it is of no use at all. That does not bring us any further, that does not help us to say goodbye to our old lives. No, then you have to really take it off.

Then you have to experience that circumcision, that circumcision without hands. That is what we read in Col.2, where Paul speaks about that circumcision for us:

- " In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism."(Col 2:11-12).

What is this Baptism Paul is speaking about? That you are baptized in Christ, that you are made one with Christ. We should not make a water baptism out of it; that is what we use to think when speaking about "baptism", but that is not what it is about. In Rom.6 that baptism is discussed, but that is not about water baptism. No, it is being baptized **in Christ**, being incorporated in Christ. Just like the Dutch Reformed write so nice in their catechism. Being incorporated, that is what they call it in the catechism. That is write, that is correct. Being baptized means being incorporated, and that is what happened.

- "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of

the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead.”(Kol 2:12).

In that baptism in Christ you see the communion with Christ, being incorporated in Him, in the baptism with Him and in Him, then you are buried with Him in death, and resurrected into the new life. That is that circumcision, without hands. Then what is being circumcised in practice? That is pulling of the body of flesh. What do you have to do then? Pulling off the body of flesh? Well, that you do not put your trust in your own flesh anymore. Not putting any trust on flesh, not trusting on your own abilities. When we think about pulling off our flesh, we only think about sinful thing, you cannot do this anymore, and you cannot do that anymore, etc. But then we think very dogmatic, but if we think about pulling of the body of flesh, what do you have to pull off? Let us read what Phil.3 says about it:

- “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”(Fil 3:3).

That is when you have a share in that circumcision without hands. Then what do you do? Then you have no confidence in the flesh anymore. And who used to have a lot of confidence in his own flesh in his previous life? Yes, Paul himself. He says in verse 4:

- “Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”(Phil 3:4-6).

All religious qualities, but all those religious qualities, also those religious qualities, all trusting in own strength, here in Phil.3 Pauls considered it but dung. He learned **not** to have confidence in the flesh. And he calls the ones who have confidence in the flesh in Phil.3:2 the evil workers:

- “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Phil 3:2-3).

That concision, that is not the real circumcision, that is concision. But if you are getting a share of the circumcision of God in baptism, in the incorporation, in the unification with Christ, then it is not a circumcision, which is a work of human hands, but that is a circumcision of the work of God's hands on your heart. **That is taking off**. And **Christ takes off that old life in us**, the religious life he takes off as well, and the dogmatic life,

when it is there, He takes off. Even that Pharisaic life He takes off. You do have to break with that. Not only with things of which it is clear as daylight that they do not belong in our lives, that you lie and cheat once in a while, that you act as if you are someone else, all those kind of things, as you can read in Ephesians 4, what does Paul say about that old life?

- “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you from now on walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” (Eph.4:17-18).

That is the society around us. That is hard-hearted, and we all notice it, that that hard-heartedness in our society, in our days too, actually only increases. But they have drifted apart of the life of God. They do not know that. Well, we must not go on like we did before, that we for example are only Christians on Sunday, and not in weekdays. As if we have, so to say, drifted apart from the life of God. We cannot walk like that. No, you must not walk like the heathen in the vanity in their thinking, that you only pursue your own career. You should not pursue a worldly career, you should pursue a heavenly career. That is what it says here.

For the world is darkened in their mind. But we are children of the light, Paul says here in Ephesians, and we must **walk** in that light.

- “Who being past feeling have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”(Eph. 4:19).

Yes that is what the world has to offer, greedily profit from all kind of uncleanness, lasciviousness, etc. You only have to turn on the TV, and in many a program the lasciviousness, particularly among youth is enormously propagated, and so to say glorified, that young people have to go crazy, go out of their minds.

- “But you have not so learned Christ; If so be that you have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: **(there it is, that is that circumcision:)** That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Eph 4:20-24).

Next time we will go a bit deeper into the circumcision of the heart.

Walking Worthy (chapter 20)

The Circumcision (2)

Last time we ended with the text:

- “But you have not so learned Christ; If so be that you have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: **(there it is, that is the circumcision:)** That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Eph. 4:20-24).

In the Greek is actually says:

- “That you **put off** concerning the former conversation **the old man**, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And **be renewed** in the spirit of your mind; And that **you put** on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

That is how it should be translated, not something that we must do now, no, it is something in which we may follow the Lord, for **He** eliminates that old man through His death. And in practice we must consider that dead, and we must go in stand in that new life, in which **He** has brought us. We can live like that new man. We must be renewed in the spirit of our minds, learn to think renewed, learn to think differently, because we **are** very different from the world, well that is expressed in many things, to many to mention:

- “Why putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Be you angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.” (Eph 4:25-32).

Here it goes on and on with very practical things. **That is the circumcision in the practice of our lives.** And if we really want to experience a victorious life, as Israel could experience to take in the land Canaan, then it started there in Gilgal with the circumcision of the flesh. And do we really want to experience a victorious life to personally take in the heavenly quarters and all blessings which are in Christ in the heavenly quarters, yes, then it starts with that circumcision, without hands, which God works in us. **We have to let Him do the work.** And does that hurt? Yet it does hurt. Since it cuts in our own old flesh. In Joshua 5 it made them ill:

- "And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp, till they were whole". (Jos. 5:8).

Yes that does hurt. Here is spoken about stone knives, but not in every text, in Jos.5:2 it says:

- "At that time the LORD said to Joshua, Make you sharp knives (this is what it says in the original text), and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time."

Sharp. And the Lord does say that we must look very closely to our lives, spiritually look at our lives, and that we must go and stand in that new life. And that we must really break with all that old stuff! That is not there anymore. That is behind us.

In fact, the circumcision is an image of taking off the old flesh, from the death of the old flesh, but at the same time, coming forth from that, the resurrection with Christ.

And then we read about the results of that circumcision of the heart:

- "If you then be risen with Christ, **seek** those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. **Set your affection** on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col 3:1-3).

Here we read about seeking the things which are above, but we must not only seek them, we have to set our affection on them. That last thing you must learn. Compare that with the text in Eph.4:23, what did we read there?

- “That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”(Eph 4:22-24).

This text too, is about the circumcision of our heart! “That you be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” Made young, be renewed. You must, so to say, learn to think new, learn to think different than you use to do by nature. So you should act with caution, you must be aware of that. And we should slowly learn people who have just come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, becoming a child of God, that they learn to think differently, through that learn to see differently, learn to hear differently, and through that learn to act differently, and eventually learn to walk differently. That is a growth process.

And as soon as we discover that our live is hid with Christ in God, and that we must learn to live from above, and in community with above, in community with Christ, twenty four hours a day, and that we must not be carnal anymore, so we must not live from below, but we must live from above so not think of the things on the earth, but think of the things which are above, yes then we gradually learn to be become young in our thinking, to be renewed. That is that new man you put on. Think differently.

We have seen a great example of that in the Bible in the countless Old-testamentic believers, because they had learned to think differently in their lives. If we have a look at Abraham, what did Abraham do? Abraham followed the call of God which he received to leave his country and his relatives to travel to a country he did not know, Canaan. And God told him it would be given to him, even given according to the law of inheritance. And despite him being there, and walking and living in Canaan, what did Abraham do? Did he build a city? Was he building a house? No, he remained living in tents, while he was yet living in the land God had given to him, where he arrived after a long journey, after a lot of round about routes, in that promised land. Why did he remain living in tents? Well that is what Hebrews show us. Because he was looking forward to a heavenly city, of which God is the master builder and originator.

So, in fact he was looking forward to the inheritance God had promised him. Actually, he was looking forward to the new earth, on which later the heavenly Jerusalem will descend, that heavenly city, and that he will walk there on the streets of gold. And what did Abraham say to himself?

- “I am a pilgrim right here, why should I see on today? No, I remain living in my tents,

for I am a pilgrim, I am passing through on my way to that heavenly city.”

And it was what his life determined. That determined his decisions in his life. Look at Moses too. Moses, born poor, but raised wealthy on Pharaoh’s court. Moses lived amongst all that wealth, all that honour and glory, which he had there on Pharaoh’s court, raised by Pharaoh’s daughter, held in high regard, in fact one of Pharaoh’s sons, directly adopted into Pharaoh’s family. But what does it say about this Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews? He forsook the riches of Egypt and accepted the indignity of Christ, and carried that, instead of enjoying the riches of Egypt. Why? That is added in Hebrews. For he had respect to **the recompense of the reward**. (Hebr 11:26).

All the time his faith-eye was aimed at what the price would be, the reward would be, the inheritance would be, not here on earth, not what was in his mind, what he possibly would inherit of Pharaoh’s daughter, if she might die, who had raised him as her own son. No, he did not look at that. He said no to that earthly inheritance. Instead of enjoying life together with the Egyptians, and get out what is in it.

And today it is not so different as in the days of Moses. Take a look at the television, for instance, what is taught to our youth by all these different news channels? Yes, of all people the young ones for there is the saying: “The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world.” What is taught them many times? Enjoy guys, go on a holiday, go crazy, go out in the weekend, you must enjoy life for soon it will be over. But that is living from the flesh. And that is preached all around the world.

But Moses chose not to enjoy in this life, but to carry the indignity of Christ, and lead the people of God, the people of Israel, for which he was eventually called. At first he did not know that, but eventually he was called to be the leader of the people, to thus lead the people from Egypt through the desert to the promised land. His look was aimed at the completion.

And you always see that believers in the Bible, of whatever congregation or group of believers, from the first page of the Bible to the last aim their faith-eye, not on today, but on eternity, and what will be their inheritance in eternity together with Christ.

We too, must act that way. Because tomorrow I will go to my job, I will set to work again. But then what should you do? If you take a look at these slaves, employees, as we can translate it in the presence, read Col.3:22

- “Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ.”(Col 3:22-24).

Even if you are at work as usual and set back to work Monday morning, then you can do that, knowing that you serve the Lord Jesus Christ in the first place in your life. And that you may stand there, in that serving, as a believer living from above. That you may know that your life is hidden with Christ in God. And God keeps that life for you, you will receive it in the future. If He appears in glory, all those set apart people, those faithful people and believers in Him, will appear with Him in glory. And then they will receive that inheritance, the reward.

And Paul says "Be of good cheer." In the normal working conditions too, in which we are so easily seduced to react in the same way as your colleagues, to start gossiping, as your colleagues gossip about others who are not present. And how there are sometimes all kind of intrigues. And all kind of things you find in the world, you find at your job as well.

No, do not be a part of it. As a believer stay far away from it. But start living from the community with the Lord Jesus Christ from above, because you may keep your eye on the recompense. The recompense of the reward which you will receive from the Lord.

Think of the things which are above, not those on the earth – But, there is another side too, yes, if you do not, if you look at the things of the earth, if you are earthly, what will happen then? Well, if you take a look at the Letter to the Philippians, it becomes obvious what will happen then, what your position will then be. Paul says:

“Brothers, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as you have us for an ensample. (For many (= believers) walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)”(Phil 3:17-19).

Is it possible for believers to walk as enemies of the cross? How?

- "(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)(Phil 3:18-19).

If you are earthly you will think of the things which are **below**, of the earth, then you are earthly. And then what are you? Then you are an enemy, an enemy of the cross, an enemy of the cross of Christ. Because if you are earthly, if you think of the things which are on the earth, instead of the things which are above, how will you act? Well, you do not act on the citizenship you received in Christ:

- "For our conversation is in heaven (original text: "we own citizenship"); from where also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."(Phil 3:20).

Then you do not realize what you received in Christ, that you are a citizen of a state up in heaven, and that you should not be earthly, but heavenly, and that you must think of the things which are above. Yes, if you, as a Christian, are earthly, only lead, only filled with the things of this earth, with what you see, see earthly, hear earthly, feel earthly, yes then you will become an enemy of the cross of Christ, and yes, what is said about those enemies in Phil.3:1? There Paul starts speaking about it, he says:

- "Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. **Beware of** dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."(Phil 3:1-2).

So you must beware, and he says it very sharp right here, of the evil workers **in the vineyard of the Lord**, and they stood on a stand, and they stand on a stand nowadays too.

But they are evil workers. And you should test every worker who works in the vineyard of the Lord. Test against Scripture. Not testing against your feelings, but testing against Scripture. Me too, not just take anything from me, everything I write down here, test it against the Bible. Test over and over again whether Christ is still central in preaching.

You must always do this. Is Christ central in every preaching? Does it exalt Christ or does it degrade Him? Are Christ and His word exalted? Do I grow in Christ through that

preaching? I.e. am I degraded by that preaching and is Christ exalted through that preaching? Is Christ increasing for me in that preaching?

Because if the preaching is right and correct, the result is that we can rejoice in the Lord. That is what we are taught. We must not rejoice in ourselves, not rejoice in the circumstances, because we must rejoice in the Lord, because the Lord is near, and we can be with the Lord. We have access to the lord. We may seek the things which are above, where Christ is. We can speak with Christ. And our live is hid with Christ in God.

But we must beware for there are dogs, Paul is very sharp in Phil.3. They are dogs and they will tear you apart. They are evil workers, and what do they do? They adulterate, they spread discord, those evil workers, who are up to discord, and they eventually preach discord instead of unity of the Body of Christ. He says:

- "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil 3:3).

A true worker and a true Christian too, yes, they have no confidence in their own flesh, and they will not pride themselves. All pride is out of the question. Who will pride, shall pride in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul adds:

- "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh." (Phil 1:4).

And then in Phil.3 he mentions all those things on which he might pride in himself, on many good deeds he did in his life and the great origin he has, a Hebrew, etc, of the tribe of Benjamin, from the people of Israel, and a Pharisee according to the law, and zealous a prosecutor of the congregation, all seen from human point of view, wonderful things, but he considers all the efforts of his own devout flesh nothing but dung. And he learned not to have confidence in the flesh anymore, and to not pride in himself, but to pride in the Lord.

Yes, the adulteration however, the dogs, the evil workers, they always emphasize the good works, you must do from you own flesh. And they enforce commandments on people, like "do not touch, do not taste, do not touch upon", and in fact they expose themselves to the Christians. Then the Christian is the central figure. But the Christian is not supposed to be the central figure, Christ is supposed to be. But when the preaching is downward, the

Christian is the central figure. Then suddenly, it is very important what that Christian feels, what that Christian experiences. And often that is a bit like the preaching of today.

And then that Christian gets all kind of help, what he should and should not do, what Paul shows us extensively in Col.2, how a self-conceiting religion comes into being, which is only a satisfaction of our own devout flesh, but through which you run the risk to miss the prize, to miss the reward.

Yes, of course that appeals greatly to all of us, if the things we should do as a Christian are mentioned. And that is what you see nowadays, and what was the same in those days.

- (For many (=believers) walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."(Phil 3:18).

Then back to the question: Is it possible for believers to walk as enemies of the cross?
How?

Their walk, their life pattern, is flatly opposed to that of Paul. And so they are called enemies of the cross of Christ. But you must be aware, it does not say "enemies of Christ", it says "enemies of the cross of Christ". They are not enemies of Christ. They love the Lord Jesus too, and they have chosen the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, they do believe it too. But yet in practice they are enemies of the **cross** of Christ. What does this mean? What is lacking in their lives? Well, the first step the Lord Jesus Christ touches upon, is lacking in their lives. That is what the Lord Jesus Himself explains in Luke 14, where He speaks about His cross, where that group of believers from Phil.3 are enemies of them, according to Paul:

- "And whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."(Luke 14:27).

And we hope to continue the next time with what that "cross bearing" means.

Walking Worthy (chapter 21)

Last time we ended with the question: Is it possible for believers to walk as enemies of the cross? We then read the text:

- "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." (Phil.3:18-19)

And back then we saw that the walk, the life pattern of the group of believers mentioned is flatly opposed to that of Paul. And they are called enemies of the cross of Christ. We then noticed that they are not enemies of Christ but that they are called enemies of the **cross** of Christ in the text. We also quoted the text from Luke 14, where the Lord Jesus tells about His cross, of which that group of believers from Phil.3 are enemies, according to Paul:

- "And whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:27)

Often this "bearing of the cross" is interpreted as though it was about earthly things. Very often that "bearing of the cross" is drawn towards the human area and then we give it some kind of meaning, illness or misfortune or disasters, broken relationships, etc. And then we call it somebody's cross. But this is not what the Lord Jesus means.

- "And whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

Yes, these Philippians of which Paul weepingly says that they are enemies of the cross as far as their walk is concerned, what does that mean? That means that in the daily practice of their lives they do **not** confess that they are **crucified** with Him, with the Lord Jesus Christ. That they consider their old flesh dead, **that is bearing their cross**. Being aware that you are crucified with Christ. That your old life is behind you, and that you may follow Christ in that way, and that you live a crucified life, at which you repeat Paul the words He speaks in Gal.2:20:

- "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."(Gal.2:20)

That is what it is about! That is bearing the cross. But these Philippians do not live with the vision of: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me."

It is about you being willing to bear your cross that way and want to follow Christ.

So, to the depths it is about you not taking into account your old flesh, but that you consider your old flesh crucified! So, actually it is about you learning to understand and apply in your life that you have experienced and lived through that circumcision of your heart! "Whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." No, when you do not leave your old flesh behind you, you do not follow Christ in your life. And that was the matter with those Philippians. They were believers, but they walked as enemies of the cross, actually they walked as enemies of the circumcised of hearts.

And then what do you get? Well, instead of seeing and considering your flesh as being crucified, you start doing all kind of things by yourself. Even exert themselves for all kind of things in good works by themselves, and then as a believer (since it is about believers), in that way you become an enemy of the cross of Christ, and such a walk leads to nothing, it only leads to loss. Since, seen from the top, you actually do not function at all. Perhaps you do think you do, for you exert yourself enormously, you are busy with all kind of things. And yes, excuse me for saying it like this, you could walk into many congregations, of any disposition in the world, also in the Netherlands, and they will have lists of what you could do, and you could, so to say, fill your life with it, 24 hours each day.

And this is what those Philippians did too, because they are under the influence of bad workers. But indeed, that leads to nothing, the end of it is destruction, "their ending is destruction."

It leads to nothing, not that you as believer will become wicked, or will be lost, no, your salvation is fixed in the finished work of Christ, that will remain, but of all those works you produce in your own flesh, nothing will remain. In 1 Kor.3 Paul calls those works: "Wood, hay and stubble."

If it is tested by the Lord, well then it will burn up. Then nothing will remain of it. That is why: "We are His work, created to do good works." If you would like to work those works, what must you do?

Then you must learn in your life, from your fellowship with Christ - While your life up above is hidden with Christ in God - to speak with Him, and to see from up above, and to ask "Lord what do You want me to do"? For we must not forget, as parts of the Body of Christ we **own** that heavenly citizenship which is up above, and we must learn to think from the high position. And we must learn to go and stand in that revelation of faith of "speak Lord, your servant hears." And if you open yourself for Him this way, yes, brothers and sister, then the Lord will speak, and the Lord will lay in your heart personally what you should or should not do in certain circumstances. For we have that right, that privilege, that we have access to the Father in the Holy of Holies. And then we are allowed to speak to Him. For Christ is not only there in the Holy of Holies, but all parts of His Body, all holy, set apart

faithful believers are there with Him, and in Him, and that is wonderful to know, that is a tremendous privilege.

How should we actually live? How should we actually walk? Walking worthy? Paul tells us in Galatians , where the cross is found once again:

- "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world **is crucified to me, (that is the circumcision of the heart)** and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. (Gal 6:14-15).

Yes, that world, that is actually behind me, together with my crucified flesh. For I am a new creation? And if I have become a new creation, what does Paul say in 2 Kor.5? Well, I actually do not know anyone after the flesh. Then I live exalted, I already live a new life, as if I am a new creation, as if I am already in the new creation. And I do not live earthly, I live heavenly. And I do not consider the things which are below and earthly, but I consider the things which are heavenly. Those things I search. Those things I consider. My God is no longer in my belly, in my feelings, as we read in Phil.3:19:

- "whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."

What is your belly? Well, that is your entire emotional life. But when I consider the heavenly things, I do not live from my emotions anymore, and my life is not controlled by my belly anymore, and by the feelings from my belly, my belly feelings, I do not live through the flesh anymore, swinging back and forth through all kind of feelings, I do not live out of my old nature, I do not live from below anymore, and I no longer consider the things of the earth. No, I do not live out of my belly anymore, I live out of the Spirit. I live out of the new nature God created within me. I am a new creation in Christ Jesus, my Lord.

Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And the world is crucified for me, and **I also consider it crucified**. And I consider my own life crucified too. And that is the power of that new life.

If you take a look at such a life, such a life in fellowship with Christ, such a hidden life, I would like to say that our life when our life is up above hidden with Christ in God, then our life has a hidden source. And if I would like to take care in my life that that new life, that new nature, that new creation which I have become, which God has created in me, that Devine nature which was created in me, if I want to experience that, well, then I have to feed it too. And if I want to feed it I have to go to the source, I have to go to that heavenly water. The water of life is flowing. And where is that source? That source is up above. That source is Christ. And then I must also enter that Holy of Holies. That must become my daily routine.

I would also like to say that that new life not only has a hidden source, but that life is extremely safe, very, very safe, untouchable, impossible to steal. Our new life is hidden in Christ! We must realize that. It is almost as if you are in a bank, and you say in that bank, I would like to rent a safe-deposit box. And if you rent such a small safe-deposit box, with such a tiny little door, you first come into a room and that room is actually one big safe. And if you step into that safe, and that very heavy door which is unlocked every day by turning that big wheel, and you walk in and then you have rented your little safe-deposit box and you open it with your key and you take out a small drawer in which you can keep precious things.

Well, you must imagine that our life is like that. And the bank-safe with that very thick door that is de Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him you can enter into heaven, into that Holy of Holies and there you will find, so to say, all kind of that safe-deposit boxes which carry our names on them. And the Lord keeps that. And that heavy vault door will close and no one can get in, nothing can be done about that. There is our new life secured in Him.

And that is where we are kept. Our lives are that safe stored in Christ, with Christ in God. What more do we wish? We have that security. And we can walk in and out. We know the code. We only have to turn the code on the door and we can enter just like that. We do have an opened door. And you only, so to say, have to fold your hands and really bend your knees to be allowed to enter. You do not have to do it where everyone can see you, you can do it deep inside your own heart. And then you are inside already. Christ is near us. Rejoice in the Lord always. That is a great security, that our life is secure and that you can let Him lead you in that life.

What else is there to say, that life is one with Christ. And where is Christ? Yes, Christ is sitting there on God's right hand. But what do we read Christ is doing on God's right hand? You must imagine, there is a table with all kind of creatures, and sometimes the Bible gives us a view, with cherafs and cherubs and the elders, the 24 elders, and the animals which is all described in Revelation and the Book Ezekiel, etc. If you take a look into that Holy of Holies, the Lord Jesus Christ is sitting on the right hand of the Father.

And what is the Lord Jesus Christ doing? The same as the apostle John did when the Lord Jesus was at the table with His apostles, His disciples. What did John do? John flattered himself on the Lord Jesus' bosom. And what do you read of the Lord Jesus? The Lord Jesus is the One who is at the Father's bosom.

And if Christ is at the Father's bosom and we are one with Him, then who is at the Father's bosom? Then we are at the Father's bosom through grace. And that is how the Father of Christ presses us to His heart. All His eyes, Father's eyes are focussed on us twenty four hours every day. We often do not know, we often do not realize

either, when we go to work and are often busy that He sees us, that His hand is over us. He keeps us, His keeping hand. Our lives are secure.

And He would really like us to pay attention to it, that we realize what a privilege we have, and that we live from that privilege, and maintain the fellowship with the Father, that we answer His love, that we do not become enemies of the cross, but that we bear that cross and apply that cross. Then what do you do?
"Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth." (Coll 3:5).

Yes, then you consider all members dead which are on the earth. In Greek it does not actually say "mortify therefore the members....!", since that sounds as an order which you have to obey. No, that is not how it is meant. In the original text, here we find the word for: "Consider it dead." Consider it dead, and that is what we should do. We must consider that old nature, the flesh, with all its members, dead. That means: Applying in real-life that you are crucified as well. I am crucified with Christ and yet I do live. But it is not me, but I live through faith. And that is living through faith! Consider the old dead.

The most stupid thing we can do is go to the grave under wrong preaching, grab a shovel, dig up the old dead body and pretend that body is alive and start fighting a bout with it too. Well, you will lose against that old flesh. Because then that old flesh suddenly appears to be alive and kicking if you do not live through faith. And then suddenly a spiritual fight comes into your life which you will irrevocably lose. You cannot possibly win. "Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth."

You can do that. And if you do so, and if you experience that in your life, then you will also experience that Christ has truly made you a new creation. And that that world is indeed dead to you, that you should not live anymore as if anything comes to you through your eyes and ears and that you react to that. No, then you do see what is in the world, but you live from up above. And then you are not going to fight against it. What should we consider dead? What is on the earth, and what you therefore must not think of.

- "Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience." (Coll.3:5-6).

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Then what is on the earth? On that earth there is fornication, in Greek we find the word "porneia", our word "porn", uncleanness, sexual uncleanness, inordinate affection, here we find "pathos", our word "passion" in the original text, evil

concupiscence, evil desires (in the original text) and covetousness, "lust" it says in the original text, which is nothing but idolatry, for which things' sake the wrath of God comes.

What kind of things are that? What does it all have to do with? Pornography, sexual uncleanness, affection, passion, desire, evil concupiscence, covetousness, lust. These are all feelings, earthly feelings, earthly tinglings of the flesh, coming to you, and it is quite amazing that it all has to do with sexuality. And apparently that was the issue in the congregation of Colossea, apparently things were going on in Colossea which were noticed by Paul and that is why he touches it here. And we must not underestimate that.

Sexuality is a very powerful thing, and especially among Christians it sometimes is a taboo, but we would better be honest and not act as if we are suddenly no human beings anymore, down-to-earth.

Well, that is a point which make many stumble. And nowadays a lot of stuff enters into our living rooms through the television. And through commercials and you name it, a lot of thing come to you, for these things in the world of commercials are being used to hit us and to tingle us to something.

So, your emotional life. That is what it has to do with over and over again. What is central in your life if you live through your feelings, and the people around us are living through their feelings, everything is about their feelings. Then who is central? Then **I** am central, then you yourself are central, instead of Christ being central. Often it has to feel good, people are listening to preachers and the test they handle is not testing on the Scripture, no, they test the things which are discussed on their feelings instead of Scripture. It has to feel good, or I must feel better through it, I have to feel "happier" through it. But then you are central instead of Christ being central. And that is idolatry. For who is central? I am central.

And who is that I? That is my biggest idol in life, which has crucified Christ, but then I do not consider it crucified, then I am an enemy of the cross, for I keep my "I" alive and kicking, and I even love it. And under certain preaching I flatter my own devout flesh, and I am working in my life of do not touch, do not test, do not touch upon, and I even make myself believe that I am a terrific Christian. Let us be honest. Often real-life is like that.

But in that we walked. That is how we are in nature, play our hunch, living from our emotions:

- "In the which you also walked some time, when you lived in them."(Coll.3:7).

Yes, we did walk in it, we all know it. And we know that old man. And that old man

functions like this. That is thinking the things of the earth. Looking like that into the world. Looking like that into the world. Reigning like that in this world.

- "But now you also put off all these." (Coll.3:8).

But what does that living through your feelings stem from? And then you read all those expressions:

- "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds." (Coll.3:8-9).

Yes, that is how we used to live, but we do not live that way anymore. We may put off all those expressions of that flesh, in real-life too, not pursue it anymore. And that it is really the case that if you have put off that old man with his deeds, and put on the new, yes, then that is gone too.

I am glad that the AKJV has translated verse 9 right, for if you pay careful attention verse 9 says:

- "Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds;
And **have** put on the new man."

So, it has already been done, it is fulfilled! You do not have to do it anymore. A lot is thought about, if we must go and put off that old man and its deeds. No, it **is** put off, it is a dead body, a laid out body. And that old man is not there anymore, and we do not have to put on that new one anymore, no, "and **have** put on the new man!" It is an accomplished fact.

God has given us that new nature, and the old one **is** gone. And we only have to go and live through faith. With Christ I am crucified, that is a fact. And with Christ, in Christ I have received the new man, and together with Him I form a new man, and my life is with Christ hidden in God. And although no one can see it, I know it and you know it. And we **have** entrance and once all who belong to His Body **will** appear with Him in glory.

Walking Worthy (chapter 22)

By letting that circumcision of the heart come real close to our hearts, God has given us that new nature, and the old nature **is** gone. And we only have to go and live through faith. With Christ I am crucified, that is a fact. And with Christ, and in Christ I have received the new man, and together with Him I form a new man, and my life is with Christ hidden in God. And although no one can see it, I know it and you know it. And we **have** entrance and once all who belong to His Body **will** appear with Him in glory.

Yes, something else is written about the new man we have put on:

- "Which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," (Col.3:10)

We know someone else who was once created after the image of his Creator. That is Adam. What does it say in Gen. 1 when Adam is created? And of course Eve out of Adam:

- "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen 1:27).

Yes, He created Adam and Eve after God's image. Who is God's image? That is Christ. Actually it says "God created man in His own image, God created man in Christ's image, in God's image, after Christ He created them, male and female He created them."

And what is written about Christ in Col.1:15?

- "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."

He is the image of the invisible God, after God's image, in His image He created them.

Yes, in nature we look like Adam, like Christ, but because of the Fall of man nothing came of it, through the Fall Adam, and we with him, became the old man, the first Adam. But in Christ a new creation takes place, which took place here in Collosians in Christ after the new man, after the last Adam, with the new nature. And what is written about that new man? That new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. (Coll.3:10).

That new man, that new nature, it is created in His image, after Christ's image. And you do have to learn that, for you are renewed in knowledge. Yes, the word "knowledge" is the word "epignosis", which is not the same word as "gnosis" which is also translated with knowledge in our translation, but "epignosis" goes beyond. It has "epi" before it, which means "above", "epi-gnosis" which is "above-knowledge".

That new man is renewed to above-knowledge. In the Dutch translation it says "full knowledge", but actually it says "above-knowledge". You will be renewed to above-knowledge after the image of His Creator. You will you be renewed with that above-knowledge after the image of His Creator? By thinking of the things which are above.

That word "full knowledge", "above-knowledge", "epignosis", we already find in Col.1:9:

- "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge (= epignosis = above-knowledge) of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That you might **walk worthy** of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col.1:9-10)

We must get clear for **whom** Paul is praying here. It are the addressees of the Letter to the Collossians, the set-apart and faithful brothers who wanted to listen to the inscrutable secrecy (Coll.1:1). So to them who belong to the Body of Christ! So Paul prays for **them** to be filled with that "above-knowledge" as He is up above. And that is a renewal, so this is actually a process Paul is praying for, what he asks for in his prayer is if the Collossians may be filled with that above-knowledge, that right knowledge of His will and that they may gain spiritual insight to walk worthy of the Lord, to please Him in everything. Gain insight.

We find "epignosis" in Col.2 too:

- "" For I would that **you** (*again that same group of faithful*) knew what great conflict I have for **you**, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and to all riches of the **full assurance of understanding (=epignosis)**, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of **Christ**; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

It is about a full knowledge, an "above" knowledge, and that **they** may know the mystery of God. Who? **Christ**, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the "safe deposit box" above, Christ, who opens up for all the treasures of wisdom. All treasures of wisdom, you could ever imagine. But you do need "above knowledge" which must so to say work in you, for as chosen believer (Ef.1:4) you **have** received that new nature, you are part of it, but it must be renewed daily to that "epignosis". And that is why we must keep on drinking daily from the Source, Christ Jesus our Lord.

Yes, people will say, knowledge, yes, but knowledge does make bloated? Yes, indeed

knowledge does make bloated. That text is in 1 Kor.8:

- "Now as touching things offered to idols, we know that we all have knowledge (= gnosis). Knowledge (gnosis) puffs up, but charity edifies." (1 Kor 8:1).

And then a lot of people say, see, knowledge puffs up, it is really no good to spend so much time on Bible study, and studying that Bible will only give hot heads and cold hearts. You should not do that. But I would like to say to you, knowledge, yes **"gnosis"** it says in the original text, not "epignosis" not "above-knowledge", no "gnosis", that knowledge puffs up, that is true. And when we are studying the Word together, and we start to see Col.3 only as knowledge ("gnosis"), and it only remains in your head, in your mind, but it does not become above-knowledge ("epignosis"), you do not allow it into your heart, you actually do not allow that circumcision of your heart, you do not really enter into "above", and you are not going to live from your life which is hidden with Christ in God, and you do not think of the things which are above, which will make you live and act differently, acting from above, yes, then it only remains knowledge ("gnosis"), and that indeed puffs up.

Then it would perhaps have been better that you had never heard of these things. Sorry, I put it this way. But if it becomes "epignosis", yes, then it is as the Word means, then you will be renewed by that knowledge, that "above-knowledge". And how will you be renewed? Well, you more and more resemble that image of the Creator. Of Christ. For He is the image of the invisible God, then you start to resemble Christ. Then we start to discover Christ in ourselves. That new man. I am crucified with Christ and yet I do live. Christ lives in me.

Yes, that exactly is the difference between "gnosis" and "epignosis". Sometimes someone asks me: yes, there are so many people studying theology, and there are a lot of people studying the Bible, and a lot of people know the Bible from cover to cover, they also know the original text, the Hebrew and the Greek and so on, why do they not discover those things?

Yes, the same goes for the three wise men, they were not really wise. They had seen His star, didn't they, and what did they do? They set off and went to Jerusalem, and they asked the people who could have known, where is that King of the Jews born, because we have seen His star. And what did the Scribes say? Let us have a look.... Maleachi says it is in Bethlehem, they said. Yes, they did know, they did have "gnosis", but they did not have "epignosis", because if they had had epignosis they would have said: "Dear wise three wise men, we will come with you, we will bow too for that Child." But that is not what they did, no, they did the opposite. In the end they conspired with king Herod, which led to the Massacre of the Innocents in Bethlehem. That is the difference between "gnosis" and "epignosis".

Perhaps you know your Bible, those Scribes did know the Hebrew original text like more than anybody else. They read the entire Old Testament. In the original text, no problem at all, but it was no "epignosis" they knew, only "gnosis". And that is a big difference.

But if you take a look at the Temple Square when the Lord Jesus had to be circumcised and He was lying in the arms of Mary as a little baby, who had "epignosis", an above-knowledge? It was Hannah, who took the child in her arms, the prophetess, and that old Simeon who spoke the prophecies, that is "epignosis", that is the difference, they had insight, a full insight, they were expecting the Christ of the Scripture, and they recognized Him. This the Scribes and Pharisees lacked and it made the big difference.

In our days too, there are many Scribes of all kinds and they also know the Scripture and they speak from the Scripture, and yet many things remain hidden to them and it has to do with the fact whether you stretch out in your life and to Whom. Or you start to think of the things which are above not on the earth. That you are not earthly, but heavenly. And that you really start to confess too: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me." And that you through that confession start to see what it means to be circumcised by God Himself with the circumcision of the heart. Then I live through faith in and of the Son of God. And then you will realize: "The old man with his deed **is** put off and I can form the new man." And then that mystery, that secrecy of Christ will open up for you. And then you will come together, and you are united in love to all richness of a full insight in the secrecy of God, Christ, in Whom all the treasures and wisdom of knowledge are hidden.

You will get to know that hidden knowledge, those hidden treasures and you will learn to live from them.

We must also realise that we are a creation. That new man is a creation, it is not a rebuilding of the old, of the old life, or that you will live better or something like that, no, it is a complete different life, a complete different way of thinking, a complete being different, which makes you to reveal a complete new **walk**. And all those old habits, based on your old way of thinking, and your old life, your way of living, yes, we have left all these old habits behind.

And what else is written about that new man? That is written in verse 11: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew." Curious isn't it, suddenly it says "Greek and Jew". Greek first, followed by Jew. Earlier that was never the case, first it was always: "first the Jew and then the Greek", and here it says "Greek and Jew" instead of "Jew and Greek".

And it says something more: "circumcision nor uncircumcision", that order is not important anymore, Barbarian and Scythian. Yes, let us talk about Scythians. In those

days they lived near the Caspian Sea, in the Caucasus. Out of all barbarians, the Romans and the Greek, in that civilised world, thought the Scythians were the most barbaric.

Well, it does not matter, there is no racial distinction **in the Body of Christ**, there is no difference in culture, that is all canceled, whether you are circumcised or uncircumcised, what kind of cultural background you have, it does not matter anymore once you belong to that group of by God chosen believers. (Ef.1:1) And viewed socially, yes, whether it are barbarians or the worst barbarian, whether you are a slave or free, everything and in all is Christ. Christ is central.

So in this Bible study from the Book Joshua, through the issue of circumcision, we ended up in the late letters of Paul. We have seen the importance of this subject for us too. And then I especially point to the circumcision of our hearts by God Himself. Because only then can we become followers of Paul. Through taking off our old flesh. When that disposition is in us, that disposition of: He must increase, but I must decrease. Then we will start looking for the things which are above, not those which are in the earth. Then we can live in the fixed security that we are heavenly citizens, then we have nothing to do with any being earthly.

Brothers and sisters, You can personally appropriate these things in a spiritual sense. That is indeed very special. But if you do not and you think to yourself, yes, nice, but it is all way to difficult for me, I leave everything as it was. Well, what can I say anymore? Then the Lord cannot do His work in us.

Then you remain a little, yes, then you do not come to a life of victory in Canaan (spiritual Canaan for us), and you get stuck in that other phase, then you get stuck in that desert again, then you get left behind as Israel was left behind there:

- "For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, (**while they were saved through the exodus from Egypt**) because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: to whom the LORD swore that he would not show them the land, which the LORD swore to their fathers that he would give us, a land that flows with milk and honey." (Jos.5:6)

Yes, they had not obeyed the voice of the Lord. They did not want to listen to it, and that is why the Lord did not want to give them the Land. They did not trust the Lord that He would give them that Land. And it is still like this. If we do not go and stand in faith, in completely trusting the Lord, and start to endorse, very personally, that our old life is put off, and that we must go and stand in the new life, and that we must be rejuvenated, now, once and for all, in our thinking, and that we do not only think spiritually on Sunday, during preaching, or Sunday morning in a Bible study, or as you read your Bible by yourself, no then you must do it on Monday morning too, when you are at work, when you are at home, when you treat your children while

raising them, or later when they are adults for a long time, and you associate with them. Always judge everything spiritually from God's point of view and let it come to spiritual things. That you run the spiritual race, not only on Sunday, but on all other days of the week too.

It is special that the number 40 is so stressed in Joshua 5, Jos.5:6. Forty has always been a period in the Bible. At "forty" something is achieved and it has always to do with trial, and after that trial there is victory. For how long the Lord Jesus was tempted in the desert? Forty days in the desert. And during that period He was tempted by the devil. But after those forty days there was victory. He had to be refreshed, etc, but there was victory after those forty days in the desert.

"Forty" is something special. When, for example, we look at Moses; what age did he reach? He reached the age of 120. But his entire life falls into three periods of 40 years. First he was in Egypt for 40 years where he was raised at Pharaoh's court, then he had to flee from Egypt and walked behind the sheep as a shepherd, he tended the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, and then he was called to return to Egypt and lead the people of Israel from there. And with that people he walked for 40 years, roamed around in the desert.

Forty years, in the Bible those are different periods.

How much time did Moses spend on Mount Sinai to be with the Lord? Forty days. How long was Elija at the Horeb? Elija, the prophet. Elija, for how long was he at the Horeb? Forty days. You could look up a lot of those "forty's" in the Bible, it is not that difficult, you only have to take a concordance and check "forty". Nowadays you will see everything appear on your screen. But what kind of number is "forty" really? It is a period of transition, a closed time. That is how it should be in our own lives, now and then such a closed time will occur, that you spiritual life suddenly changes from the period of childhood to a new period of being a son. Suddenly the childhood is over and you are no longer God's child, suddenly you are an adult in faith. Suddenly the "manna-period" is over and you move toward solid food. Suddenly the manna is not given anymore, but you live from what the land, the heavenly land, the heavenly homeland yields, the heavenly districts, and the blessings that "grow" there, the blessings which God has ready for those who belong to Him. And that is what you will eat.

Suddenly your spiritual life turns into a completely different phase. That is what the number 40 expresses. 40 is 5 x 8. Five is the number of grace, and in the Bible eight is always the number of a new beginning. And actually, it is God's grace, that a new period begins in your life. That was the case with Moses, that it turned into a new period in his own life, and with Israel, that wandered around in the desert for 40 years, that they then reaches Canaan. And the same goes for us too. Through God's

grace we suddenly enter a new period, then we will get enlightened eyes of the heart and we will discover the spiritual meaning of Christ's cross and resurrection and we can make this our own.

That is actually God's work, the ongoing work of Christ, that his hand never grows tired to give it to us over and over again. And He is by no means ready with us, for He wants to take us further and further. And that good work, He has begun in us, He will not abandon just like that, He continues it. (Phil. 1:6). And when that mind (Phil. 2:5) is in us, He will take us into that new period. And then you will experience that spiritual circumcision which is made without hands, then you will suddenly experience once again that you celebrate Pascha (Israel) again with each other, and that you are new again and see with new eyes (of the heart). And that your eyes open up to the greatness and the meaning of the cross, of the blood of Christ, of the Passover. And then the manna will stop, it will be changed for solid food, the roasted grain, and the unleavened bread, which they ate together there in Israel after the Pasha.

Perhaps we will think then, well we will be ready for it. Well, not completely. Something has to happen first. I think Joshua must have been impressed by what by then still had to happen. And I think that we will be impressed by it in our personal lives. For what happened to Joshua?