

The Place of Nearness

Hello folks, this is something I've been really looking forward to sharing.

So the scripture that stood out this time, was this one in 1 Corinthians 1:9 and it says...

"God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord". (1 Corinthians 1:9 NKJV)

And at first glance, the word fellowship, which is perfectly correct, doesn't immediately convey the wonder and the richness of what's being said here. But you know how it is when The Holy Spirit opens something up, even though we may have read it hundreds of times before, it just comes alive doesn't it? ... Because this really is a wonderful statement and the key, or rather the context, is found in those two words.., *"His Son"*. And that's what stood out in this verse.

But first of all if we could look at the Greek word translated here as 'fellowship', which is *'koinonia'*, and it means, partnership..., having a common bond.., sharers or partakers of the same thing. In fact, that's a very good way to think of it, since the word 'partaker' tends to appear in all of the closely related words.

So joint participation, to be united in something.

The bread and wine that we all partake of, Communion, is this word and you can see why ...

because having believed on Him, we've all become partakers of the forgiveness of sins through His blood and partakers of His body that was broken for us. *"For we the many are one loaf"* scripture says. (1 Corinthians 10:16-17 NKJV)

So *'koinonia'* is about relationship in some form and in that relationship, sharing a common bond.

Which can relate to many things really. It's also used with regard to the close intimacy and bond that exists between a man and wife.

There are other similar words as well that are all related, such as *'koinoneo'*, which is the verb that they all stem from, meaning 'to partake' or to have a share in something. Then there's *'koinonos'*, which is a noun meaning 'partaker.'

And Peter uses this when he refers to the Gospel and speaks of *"the exceeding great and precious promises, that through these we may be partakers (koinonos) of the divine nature"*, speaking of the promise of the Spirit through the Gospel to every believer that we all partake of ... and of the subsequent fruit that then follows in a believer's life. (2 Peter 1:4)

And that's a good example really ... because *"koinonia"* comes from this word and we see here in Peter's letter, that the common bond, is one of being united in the faith ... and consequently of sharing, or being 'a partaker', of the gift of The Holy Spirit that's freely given to every believer, according to God's promise.

We all get to drink and partake of the one Spirit. Which Paul refers to when he wrote,

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed [is] everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Galatians 3:13-14 NKJV)

"In Him you also [trusted], after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise..." (Ephesians 1:13 NKJV)

And then of course there's the word *'koine'* as in 'koine Greek', which means 'common'..., the shared or common language that was spoken at the time when the letters that go to make up The New Testament were written.

The Place of Nearness

Prior to that, I believe they had different forms of Greek, posh and not so posh and with a diverse society it made the language very unwieldy and confusing. So they simplified it into a form that everyone could use, hence 'koine', common Greek.

So context determines what's being shared and with whom... and this is important because '*koinonia*', could be used for instance in the context of a business partnership, where you needn't necessarily get on but are prepared to work together to make money. Your fellowship being centred around whatever the business is.

Or a group of friends on a social level sharing the same interests, such as partaking in a particular sport or activity..., or associates having a common bond..., something like that.

In each case the relationship or partnership, the '*koinonia*', is based on that common bond.

But by inspiration of The Holy Spirit, Paul said we've been "*called into the fellowship of His **Son***", "which fixes it exactly !

God wants us to know that the common bond that we share, the '*koinonia*' we've been called into, is with "*His Son*".

The context is one of Sonship..., of being family, of being sons. It's very specific, "*with His Son...*" and then, it says,

"... Jesus Christ our Lord."

In Romans 8:14-17 NKJV, it says..., "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."*

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ....," And of course the word adoption isn't as we understand it today, it means Sonship, the placement of a Son.

And that's the richness of this verse in 1 Corinthians 1:9 that's not immediately apparent ... but it's those two words,

*"His **Son**"*, that determine exactly the context of the '*koinonia*', that we've been called into with The Lord Jesus our Saviour and it's as family, as sons of God.

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." It says in Galatians 3:26.

"For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you [are] Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:26-29 NKJV)

And as God's children through faith in Jesus, we received The Spirit of His Son, crying " Abba Father !"

"And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

(Galatians 4:6 NKJV)

So that we have the same Spirit, the same nature... and by God's Grace, we were placed in Christ when we believed., raised **with** Him... and seated **with** Him ... at The Father's right hand.

Partakers of everything **with** "*His Son*".

That's the joint participation, the fellowship, the '*koinonia*' that we've been called into.

And for most of us, the immediate thought is, "yeh but who am I that this should refer to me? I'm just a nobody."

But the Apostle Paul, said,

The Place of Nearness

"For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, [are called]. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are..., that no flesh should glory in His presence.

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption-- that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."
(1 Corinthians 1:26-31 NKJV)

So having been called near through the Gospel, our identity and position is completely interwoven with The Lord Jesus ... and obviously with each other as well. A unity and a common bond that we all share ..., having the same Spirit, the same Father ... and as sons, are joint heirs with Christ. And The Lord's done it all because it pleases Him. A plan and purpose from before the beginning of time.

And this is the context regarding the 'fellowship' we've been called into with "His Son". It's definitely a family thing.
And over all is The Father's love.

*"Behold **what manner of love** The Father has bestowed on us ...", it says in 1 John 3 verse 1. Pointing out that it's the love that exists between a Father and his sons. "...that we should be called children of God!"*

"...Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." (1 John 3:1-3 NKJV)

And here in our text, (1 Corinthians 1:9) it says "God is faithful (or trustworthy)...", meaning we can trust His Word. Something that Paul by inspiration of The Holy Spirit was always emphasising in his letters, regarding God's Word to us through the Gospel, concerning the finished work of Christ. That incorruptible seed that was planted in our heart. That it's the power of God unto salvation to all who believe and he held it up as being vital., 'the' number one thing... and said, "God is faithful, by whom by whom you were called ...".

And we've all responded to God's call haven't we, when He reached out in love to us through The Gospel?

At some point, that Word was sown in our heart, that tells of His great love for us and of all He's done through His beloved Son Jesus Christ in order to bring us near to Himself. We believed and asked Him into our heart.

And that's the Gospel, isn't it? God's call to us. The key to everything.

"...into the fellowship of His Son...", so having been born again through God's Word that proclaims the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus, He's called us near to Himself and placed us in Christ when we believed and has given us The Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Sonship. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." (Ephesians 2:13 NKJV)

In fact, the word 'church', 'eklesia', literally means called out ones. *ek*=out from, *klesia* from the word *kaleo*=to call.

The Place of Nearness

So we've been called 'out of the world' and 'into the fellowship of His Son'. The place of nearness...and where we're concerned, this '*koinonia*' that we've been called into with The Lord Jesus, is in this context of Sonship. That's the common bond, the fellowship that we all share..., as sons.

And straightaway you think of scriptures like this one in Romans 8:28, that says..., *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to [His] purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined [to be] conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren*". (Romans 8:28-29 NKJV)

Obviously we're all unique and retain that individuality..., the body being made up of many members..., nevertheless, in all the essential things, we have everything in common with The Lord and with each other.

The same Spirit, the same Heavenly Father ..., a shared inheritance and the whole family unit is bound together in love.

"...giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed [us] into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:12-14 NKJV)

Incidentally, the word 'partakers' there isn't 'koinonos', it's 'meris', meaning to have a portion, or lot. Referring specifically to our allotted inheritance in Christ.

But the '*koinonia*', the common bond that we have with The Lord and with each other, covers all of this and more ...and is in this context of being Sons of God ... and over all is the great love of our Father.

Perhaps here we could look at something relevant to this in Genesis, concerning Joseph...because by type there are many things in his life aren't there, that foreshadowed the Lord Jesus in some way? Both beloved of their Father, rejected by their own, sold for a few pieces of silver... . But the main thing we see in Joseph's life, the culmination of all that went before, is that God prepared and positioned him to be instrumental in saving thousands, if not millions of lives during those 7 years of famine.

So a real event but also a type that foreshadowed The Lord Jesus...because you could say, that for a great many people, that Joseph was very much a Saviour for the world at that time..., on a physical level so to speak.

Because scripture tells us that this famine was global, it wasn't just a regional thing or a continent even ...but that **all** countries were coming to Egypt for grain.

"The famine was over all the face of the earth", scripture says, *"... and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. So 'all countries' came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands."* (Genesis 41:56-57 NKJV)

Anyway, in Genesis 42:1-8, this is leading up to where Joseph, now a great prince in Egypt, makes himself known to his brothers after many years ... and then he calls them near.

"When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?"

The Place of Nearness

And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die."

So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him." And the sons of Israel went to buy [grain] among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. Now Joseph [was] governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with [their] faces to the earth. Joseph saw his brothers and recognised them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food." So Joseph recognised his brothers, but they did not recognise him. (Genesis 42:1-8 NKJV)

And for the famine to have become severe, even in Egypt, suggests that the river Nile, which they relied on totally and still do to this day, must have been really diminished in its flow and level, making the usual irrigation methods impossible. Obviously no seasonal flooding of the land flanking the river either, which normally enriched it year after year, making it so fertile.

And the Nile itself is huge, about 4,000 miles long and its basin with all its tributaries etc, covers 11 African countries.

So it does suggest that the rainfall just wasn't there.

But this was bigger yet.., not just a continent, it was *"over all the face of the earth"*.

So whether it was drought, or something else, isn't clear ... but it was certainly a global famine lasting seven years. Most likely drought... but just imagine, no respite, with every year necessarily worse than the previous one, the effects being cumulative.... and God positioned Joseph to be in the right place at the right time, so that through him, many lives should be saved. "All countries came to Joseph...", it says.

And of course the number 7 itself in scripture is a significant number, often referred to as the number of perfection.., something that's entire and complete. So these seven years signify that this was a catastrophic global event.

And Paul tells us that all these things happened to them as examples (**typos=types**) for us, on whom the ends of the ages have fallen ..., for our instruction and for our encouragement as God's children.

So in Joseph's life, we see a picture of The Lord Jesus, God's Beloved Son, sent to be the Saviour of The world. Dealing with a catastrophe far greater and with eternal consequences...., this time affecting the whole of mankind.

The death and the separation from God that was brought about through Adam's sin.

And just as in the type, all countries 'came to Joseph ...'; so 'all that come to Jesus will be saved'. (John 3:16 NKJV)

And just very briefly, for anyone unfamiliar with Joseph's story..,

Many years earlier when Joseph was about seventeen, all of his older half-brothers, ten of them, had become so jealous of their Father's obvious love for him, that finally they had enough....(Genesis 37:3-4) and ganging up on him in an out of the way place, they seized him, stripped him of his special coat that had been given to him by his Father...and threw him into a dry water cistern, a pit in the ground.

The special coat that set him apart from all his brothers was clear evidence of the love that Jacob had for his son Joseph, who obviously he saw as his true first-born son, born of Rachel, the woman he loved. Most know the complicated situation that saw their father Jacob, the poor

The Place of Nearness

chap, ending up with 4 wives! But Rachel had always been his first love and she had been barren for many years until Joseph was born. Who sadly died in childbirth when Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother was born.

And when you read the account in Genesis 37, it says that Joseph's ten older half-brothers, were tending the family's sheep, presumably a large flock knowing their background, at Shechem, which was family owned land, some 50 miles north of their home in Hebron in the south. And Jacob their Father had sent Joseph to find out how they were getting on. Which is fair enough, as in the early years there had been serious conflict at Shechem when the family first arrived.

They had moved off a ways and when he finally located them, it says that *"they saw him afar off..."*. (Genesis 37:18)

It was the coat! It was unmistakable. Which by type I believe, speaks of the rich anointing of The Spirit upon the Lord Jesus which was without measure, that incensed the Pharisees so.

The miracles and healings being such visible evidence of The Father's approval of His beloved Son..., who had said at the start of Jesus' ministry..., *"this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"*. (Matthew 3:16-17 NKJV)

A beautiful anointing of Mercy and Grace and Power, that was clearly evident wherever He went, that caused so much jealousy and indignation in the religious leaders of the day, who eventually sought to kill Him.

*"Rabbi **we know** that you are a teacher sent from God..."* said Nicodemus who was a chief ruler of the Jews and Pharisee, who had come to Jesus secretly by night..., *"for no one can do these signs unless God is with him ?"* (John 3:2 NKJV)

Yet despite knowing this, scripture tells us that the majority of the Pharisees had determined in their hearts to have Jesus killed. It's hard to understandbut it was just like the coat that Joseph was given by his Father to denote his love and favour on him as his beloved son and place of position, that so incensed his older brothers.

"they saw him afar off...". The coat was unmistakable... and at that point, some made up their minds to kill him.

And when they threw Joseph into that dry cistern and were deciding what to do next., The Holy Spirit had the writer point out that they first stripped him of that coat. *"So much for this dreamer"*, some of them must have thought.

Just like the Pharisees who mocked Jesus as he hung on the cross..., unaware that it was for all of us, themselves included, that He hung there in our place, bearing all our sin. Just as Isaiah had prophesied, what..? 500 years earlier? Saying, *"we esteemed him not ... and smitten of God"*. (Isaiah 53:3-5 NKJV)

So at first, some of the brothers wanted to kill him and were divided as to what to do next ... and having separated for a little while, those that remained at the dry pit considered their next move and took advantage of some passing traders, selling him to them for 20 pieces of silver, to be then sold on into slavery... and so in effect, gone forever. Convincing their Father afterwards, that a wild animal must have killed him by showing him Joseph's coat that they'd soaked in the blood of a young goat. (Genesis 37:28-32).

So now, years later, at a time of severe famine ..., Joseph's brothers have come to Egypt for grain, as the famine had really begun to take effect. At first they were completely unaware that this Prince of Egypt that they dealt with, decked out in fine Egyptian garments and up to that

The Place of Nearness

point speaking Egyptian to his servants, was in fact their own brother Joseph who they had sold into slavery many years ago.

And eventually he reveals who he is, and they're obviously completely stunned and also very afraid ... because here he is, a mighty prince in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself, with the power of life and death.

This is in Genesis 45:4 (NKJV),

*"And Joseph said to his brothers, **"Please come near to me." So they came near**".* (Which is the heart of this little study).

Then he said: "I [am] Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.

For these two years the famine [has been] in the land, and [there are] still five years in which [there will be] neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

So now [it was] not you [who] sent me here, but God; ...". (Genesis 45:4-8 NKJV)

When you read that, doesn't it remind you of Acts chapter 2 and Peter's words on the day of Pentecost, when He spoke to the Jews who had gathered in wonder at what was happening after the disciples had all been filled with The Holy Spirit?

22 *"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know..."* (just like Joseph's coat..., the miracles, signs and wonders, were clear evidence of The Father's approval and favour upon His beloved Son.)

23 *"Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. ...* (Acts 2:22-24 NKJV)

36 *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now when they heard [this], they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men [and] brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:36-39 NKJV),*

41 *Then those who gladly received his word were baptised; and that day about three thousand souls were added [to them]. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship (**koinonia**), in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.* (Acts 2:41-42 NKJV)

44 *Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common (koinos),* (Acts 2:44 NKJV)

Anyway, getting back to Joseph .., Genesis 45 v 8...

*"So now [it was] not you [who] sent me here, but God and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. **You shall dwell in the land of Goshen,***

The Place of Nearness

and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for [there are] still five years of famine." (Genesis 45: 8-11 NKJV)

"please come near to me", he says.... and then, ***"You shall dwell in the land of Goshen..."***, which remarkably also happens to mean *'drawing near'*. Obviously with this being its name prior to this, it's no coincidence is it? But something that God arranged beforehand in order to show us, His sons and daughters, that there's something so important here for us to understand. And it's being flagged up in this way, so that we just can't miss it. This place of nearness with Joseph, which for us, speaks of The Lord Jesus and of our place now in Christ, having been called near through The Gospel.

And he says..., **" There...., 'I' will provide for you"** . Which is the essence of the Gospel message isn't it?

Called near, with all our needs met in Christ.

And not just met but *"according to His riches in Glory"*. (Ephesians 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:3).

The thing is, this was in Egypt not Canaan ... but then we're strangers and sojourners in this world.

In the world... but not of the world..., scripture says. Having believed on The Lord Jesus and been born again, our citizenship is now in heaven, we're family ... and our place for eternity is with our heavenly Joseph.

Anyway, the brothers in their own hearts were having to face up to the truth of what they'd done but on Joseph's part there's no reproach, no bitterness, just an overwhelming sense of joy at seeing them and a desire for them to draw near. With a word for them and the whole family to come and dwell in the land of Goshen, the place of nearness. ***"You shall dwell in the land of Goshen and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. There I will provide for you,"***

But have a look at what Pharaoh had to say about all of this

"Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the "best" of the land of Egypt, and you will eat "the fat of the land"."

Now you are commanded--do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt [is] yours.

(Genesis 45:16-20 NKJV)

"The land of Egypt [is] before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen. (Genesis 47:6, NKJV). So the place of 'nearness', is 'the best' of the land. Of course it is.

"And Joseph situated his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded." (Genesis 47:11 NKJV)

The Place of Nearness

It's remarkable when you think about it. Obviously The Lord wants us to learn from this, that in the most desperate of times, Joseph's family, (and that's the thing, just like us they were family, with all the promises wrapped up in them)..., having been called near and placed in the best of the land, they didn't just get by and survive..., it says that now they would partake of the best of what Egypt had to offer being under the care and nurture of Joseph.

"...*the fat of the land*", Pharaoh said. And it's there that they were provided for, in the place of nearness.

"*You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, **and you shall be near to me**, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. **There I will provide for you,**"*

So we can really see The Lord's seal on this in so many ways and that all these things have been recorded as Paul says, for our benefit, as examples and for our encouragement.

Because we've all been called near through The Gospel.

"...*who has saved us and called [us] with a holy calling, not according to our works..., but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began..,*" (2 Timothy 1:9 NKJV)

And in Ephesians.., that He has "*blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*" (Ephesians 1:3-5 NKJV)

So this scripture in 1 Corinthians 1:9, where it says ...,

"*God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord*", really is wonderful.

Speaking of our place in Christ as Sons of God and having all things in common with '*His Son*'..., the one who ministers life to us and keeps us safe. "**There...**"(in that place of nearness) "**I...will provide for you**".

He's our Lord and Saviour, our kinsman redeemer, (so family again). Our Great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, which of course again speaks of family, being the original priesthood arrangement of firstborn sons.

And as firstborn from the dead, never to die again, He will forever be our Great High Priest.

And in the Old Testament where the types depict heavenly truths, The High Priest in the presence of God wore that breastplate against his heart didn't he? Encrusted with 12 precious jewels that represented all the children of Israel, the whole family.., the names of the 12 sons of Jacob engraven on them . What a picture of us being carried on our Saviour's heart forever? (Exodus 28)

Similarly, on his shoulders..., six either side, indicating that it's His strength that upholds and keeps us.

So it's not the case that we're having to strive continually to draw near, as though The Lord's far away or distant ... because the truth is, we couldn't be closer. He's brought us so near to Himself when we responded to His call through The Gospel, having placed us in Christ and given us His Spirit,

"*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*"(Ephesians 2:13 NKJV)

The Place of Nearness

So that having put our trust in The Lord Jesus and His blood that was shed for all our sin..., now as God's sons, the focus is simply one of acknowledging our place in Christ by faith..., *"Raised with Him..., Seated with Him..., far above all principalities and powers, not only in this age but also in the one to come."*(Ephesians 1:19-21 & Ephesians 2:5-6)

And to avail ourselves of all the benefits of this place of nearness, where all our needs are met, over and above all that we can ask or think. No wonder scripture says *"abounding in thanksgiving."* (Colossians 2:6-10)

And it's all about abiding, isn't it? Which scripture describes, as of us having entered into His rest. (Hebrews 4:10-11 NKJV)

"For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God [did] from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. (unbelief)."

The thing is, every day we look in the mirror and at each other and in the natural we see the same old faces ...and are only too aware aren't we, of all our faults and failings ? And it's easy to go by that and lose sight of the truth.

Or we can look in God's mirror...,which is His Word through The Gospel, that tells of our true identity in Christ and of the riches of His grace that's ours, in this place of nearness. This *'koinonia'* that we have with The Lord as God's sons.

In fact, in one of Paul's letters he said in effect, "don't let anyone tell you differently and rob you of what's yours...,

"for you are complete in Him". Colossians 2:10.

There were always those wanting to reintroduce works and self-effort weren't there? And our Adversary is relentless in his efforts to have us focus on our old nature. But it's when we understand that having believed on The Lord Jesus we were given the Spirit of Sonship. That this is what it's all about. *"Christ in you the hope of glory"* scripture says.

(Colossians 1:27)

And that's the battleground really isn't it? Either walking by faith in God's promise to us through the Gospel, The New Covenant, where our trust is wholly in the finished work of our Saviour Jesus Christ and learning to be led of The Spirit. Or to go by sight and end up constantly struggling, as we look at our own successes and failures.

But like Abraham we've chosen to believe God's Word to us.

"If you are the son of God..?" Was the Devil's words to Jesus when He was being tested in the wilderness. So being sons, it shouldn't come as any surprise when those fiery arrows are aimed at us too. Even though at the time we think they're our own thoughts. "Oh really..? You..,a Son of God ?" "Well if you are, how come this ...and what about that ?"

But I love God's Word that says (and this is a beauty, especially if you break it down into portions),

*"...who has saved us and called [us] with a holy calling....., ' not according to our works'...., **but according to His own purpose and grace.... which was given to us in Christ Jesus..... before time began..,"***

(2 Timothy 1:9 NKJV)

That just claps a stopper over all the enemies attempts to condemn and deceive, saying that you're not good enough... because this is all of God our Father.

The Place of Nearness

"...giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed [us] into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:12-14 NKJV)

And when you check the word "conveyed, or 'translated' as the King James has it, it's not a figure of speech., a definite change of location took place when we were saved and He brought us so near, placing us in Christ (the anointed one).

"Now are we the sons of God but it does not yet appear what we shall be...", John says. (1 John 3:2 NKJV)

"...do you not know...", Paul said, *"... that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* (Romans 6:3-4 NKJV)

"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For [the death] that He died, He died to sin once for all; but [the life] that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:8-11 NKJV)

And it's no accident either, that we were born in this church age and at this time in particular., just as it was no accident that the chosen Apostles were there, ready to respond to Jesus' call to them. Scripture says...,

"... that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Romans 9:23-24 NKJV)

So., this place of nearness is ours to own because it's the truth. As beloved children we can come boldly before the throne of Grace with all of our requests and cares, knowing that our prayers will be heard because of Jesus. And that our Father has *"blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,."* (Ephesians 1:3-5 NKJV)

And that *"all things that pertain to life and godliness have been given to us through the knowledge of Him who called us.."* (2 Peter 1:3 NKJV)

Whatever we need in our development and walk with The Lord, it's all been provided for in Christ and it's

" through the knowledge of Him who called us ...".

Because often we feel it's incumbent on us to find the strength., the will, the wherewithal ..., which can actually make you feel even worse if you're feeling low or flat, can't it ? As though you're failing in some way.

When in fact, of ourselves we can do nothing and the supply comes *"through the knowledge of Him who called us ..."* because He's the one who saved and He's the one provides for us..., whose heart is wholly given over to seeing us established us in His love and filled with His Spirit.

The Place of Nearness

So whether it's through the preaching or whatever..., or The Lord simply reminds us by dropping a thought into our mind., that still small voice within, that urges us to look away from the cares and distractions and self-examination and to look to Him instead....because straightaway our faith is stirred and we find ourselves being built up and encouraged through looking to our loving Saviour and all that He's done for us... and of our place now in Christ as God's sons.

Because it's all of Grace..., faith through Grace, that's the thing. With even the faith to believe being a gift...,

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God," (Ephesians 2:8 NKJV)

So that no-one will be able to say "yes but you know what, if it hadn't been for me.....?",

"that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption-- that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

(1 Corinthians 1:29-31 NKJV)

Very often it's just a simple foot washing from the cares of the day that we need, isn't it?

Sometimes it's a deeper revelation of The Lord's love and commitment to us we that need to see, that The Lord gives through something that we hear or read.

Sometimes, a simple reminder by The Lord to just ask., to ask concerning anything; "*Please help Lord*" concerning whatever it is. In the knowledge that He will hear and answer according to the riches of His Grace..., over and above all that we ask or think. The provision being "*through the knowledge of Him who called us ...*", The Lord Jesus and His finished work. Because in Him we see God our Father's great love for us, His endless Grace and complete provision.

"There, I will provide for you", and it's in this place of nearness, in Christ, where God has placed us.

Raised with Him and seated with Him at The Father's right hand, far above all principality and power. Not somewhere distant and removed that we have to aim for but this place of nearness that's ours to own by faith because it's the truth.

In finishing, there's a psalm that in just a few words, describes perfectly this '*koinonia*' with The Lord Jesus that we've been called into through The Gospel. This family bond of sonship that we all share ... and it's Psalm 133.

I'm pretty sure we looked at this some time ago but it's worth another look, in that it describes in pictures the corporate blessing that comes first upon the Head and then is shared by all the body of Christ because of the family bond, the "*koinonia*", that as sons, we have with '*His Son*'..., *Jesus Christ our Lord*"

This is the amplified version which expresses it so well..., **PSALM 133.**

"..... Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!

It is like the precious oil [of consecration] poured on the head, Coming down on the beard, Even the beard of Aaron, Coming down upon the edge of his [priestly] robes [consecrating the whole body].

It is like the dew of [Mount] Hermon Coming down on the hills of Zion;

For there the LORD has commanded the blessing: life forevermore. (Psalm 133:1-3 AMPLIFIED)

Everything about this psalm speaks so clearly of The Body of Christ and of The Lord Jesus as Head of the body.

The Place of Nearness

It's about family (*brethren*), so therefore sons...and speaks of unity, while the word 'dwell' (*yashav*), literally means to sit.

"you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus ..." scripture says. (Galatians 3:26 NKJV)
"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus," (Ephesians 2:6 **NIV**)

And then, the two pictorial examples that show this "*koinonia*", the common bond and shared blessing that we have with The Lord Jesus and with each other.

And when you look closely, both examples point to the Royal priesthood. The Body of Christ, made up of God's sons, that we are Priests and Kings..., with The Lord Jesus as our Great High Priest and King of kings.

In the first example we see the anointing oil poured on the head of Aaron, God's chosen High Priest over Israel at that time, which then ran down over his garments that covered his body right down to the hem of his garment it says, his full-length robe. Again no accident ... but by type, depicting the body of Christ, clothed in His Righteousness, being anointed with the same priestly anointing that's been poured first upon our Head, The Lord Jesus our Great High Priest.

"But you [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;" (1 Peter 2:9 NKJV)

And in the second, the picture is of mountains, and the image there is of Mount Hermon in Northern Israel, which is the highest peak in the land, typifying The Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings. And how it is, that because of its height within this mountainous ridge, it attracts moisture like a magnet, which then falls as rain, snow..., or as it says here, as dew..., which then distils upon all the surrounding mountains and hills of this same mountain range.

The highest mountain and the lesser mountains ... but essentially, all part of the same mountain range. Which again depicts that common bond, the "*koinonia*" that we have with one another and above all with The Lord Jesus. The shared corporate anointing and blessing that is first upon The Head and then flows to the whole body of Christ.

Paul uses similar imagery doesn't he, where he speaks of us as living stones being built together as part of God's Temple, the body of Christ? With Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone upon which the temple is built. Again it's this "*koinonia*", that we've been called into with ***'His Son'...***, **The Lord Jesus Christ.**

"...Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner[stone], in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit". (Ephesians 2:19-22 NKJV)

Which is why Paul in his letter to the Colossians says in effect, not to be tricked by those who say you have to attain to something ..., "*for you are complete in Him*", and then goes on to speak about holding to the Head (The Lord Jesus), from whom everything flows. Just looking to the one who supplies all our needs. (Colossians 2:10 and 19. NKJV)

Anyway, I'll finish there.

