

***Ephesians 4:1***

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called

As we discussed last week, **4:1** is the launching point for all that is in Chapters 4-6 and it is founded on all that is spoken over our lives in Chapters 1-3. Because of all the amazing authoritative truths which speak to God's love for us, the Spirit implores us to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. Accordingly, in **4:2** He addressed our relationships with other believers and exhorted us to deal with each other with humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance in love. And what we learned is that there is a direct correlation between our choosing to believe what we were taught Chapters 1-3 and our ability to love as the Spirit desires.

The more you learn to dwell in the amazing authoritative truths spoken over your life, the more you are secure in who you are in God, the more you trust yourself to Him, the more humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance in love will burst forth from your life. These attributes are all fruits of the Spirit which will be present in your life when Jesus is more and more at home in your heart.

To illustrate this I want to go back to our description of the long corridor of the soul [diagram1]. Picture a hallway with many doors on either side that open up to the various rooms of your heart. You start off life with those doors open, but as things happen and you incur wounds from your family, friends, loved ones, the world, etc., you start to shut those doors in an attempt to protect yourself and ensure that you will never be hurt that way again [diagram 2].

---

Shutting the door, however, does not really help; in fact, just the opposite, it makes things worse. It locks in the pain, the agony, and the hurt and in that little room the emotion festers and creates a horrible infection inside your soul. As a result, what flows from your life is not humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance in love; rather, your life is marked with all the self-serving fruits of the flesh as you become the guardian and protector of your soul.

Worst of all, the longer it festers the more you become afraid to ever open that door. So you add some reinforcement. You bolt the door, nail up wood, weld on then metal bars, and then when you think it is finally secure (and you are entirely shut down in that area of our life), you wall paper it and hang up a nice Jesus calendar so you can pretend that you are really ok [diagram 3].

As time goes on and you incur more injury, especially the kind of things that are so unjust that you cannot begin to understand why they happen, you shut more doors because you now have so many reasons to no longer trust people or God for that matter. Instead, your trust lies in your ability to protect yourself and in effect be your own god. As a result, you are constantly torn back and forth between living from your *New Nature* bearing the fruits of God and living from your *Old Sinful Nature* bearing the fruits of the flesh [diagram 4]

But Jesus loves you too much to leave you in that condition. Therefore, He roams the corridor of your soul looking for doors through which He can enter and take up residence [diagram 5]. The more doors to which He has access the more His character and nature fills you. As a result, through you, He will be humble, gentle, patient, and tolerant in love. So the key to obeying ***Ephesians 4:2*** is merely to trust yourself to Jesus so He can love through you [diagram 6]; it's the only way.

---

Unfortunately, most of us are too scared to just give Jesus access to these rooms as we don't really trust that He is good. And often the more He knocks the tighter we make our grip and the more we strive to control what happens in our life. Now Jesus and the Spirit are gentlemen, they do not and will not break down the door; but, if necessary, they will knock quite hard by bringing situations and events into your life to get your attention and get you to focus on your need to open the door—your need to have more of Jesus.

***Revelation 3:19-20***

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

What a beautiful promise. God will do whatever is necessary to focus your attention on your need for Him. He loves you so much that He will move time and space to bring up situations in your life where you come face to face with your abject inability and truly come to know why you need His life in yours. And He does it all just so you can experience Him. Culturally, in the first century, one of the most important times of the day was supper. It was when people stopped, rested, and enjoyed each other. It was a time of great intimacy and fellowship. This is what He desires to share with you.

He wants you to know Him as God in every nook and cranny in your soul. That is why Paul prayed that we would all know and fully experience the love of God

---

and thereby be filled with the fullness of Christ [diagram 7]. This means, however, that you have to take a risk and open up each door. If you do Jesus will come in and not only clean out the emotion and the mess, but He will show you why He allowed you to be hurt in the first place—why the wound was part of His beautiful plan for your life. He then will root you and ground you in His love; yes, you will become convinced that each wound was purposeful and from your loving Father.

I know that just the idea that the tragedies that we incur in our lives are somehow a part of God's plan of love is very hard to swallow, but remember, He predestined us "according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will" (*Ephesians 1:11*); and, since God is love, all that He does or allows in our lives is an expression of His love.

This is why believing the authoritative truths, which He spoke over our lives, is absolutely critical to our practical living. Unless we are willing to take Jesus at His word and bet our lives on His character and nature, we are never going to have the courage, the reason, or the confidence to open up the doors and let Him have access. That is why Paul prays that we would be strengthened with power in the inner-man through the Spirit so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith.

Maybe right now you are feeling overwhelmed and are beginning to shut down because you know you have closed so many doors and you don't even know where to begin. Don't worry; it's not for you to figure out. Remember, Jesus is going to come knocking one door at a time. He will make perfectly clear what room He wants to enter and He will knock and knock until He gets your attention. Just open your ears to Him, seek Him, and ask Him to show you. Then ask for that power in the inner-man to be provided in abundance, and He will give you the

---

strength and courage to open the door. Then the process of cleansing and healing will begin. The process won't be pretty, but the result will be nothing short of miraculous! Remember, He is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works within us (**3:20**).

Besides, His love is jealous. He wants you and it is all very personal. He wants every room to be open to Him so you will know His love and be filled with the fullness of Christ (**3:19**) and thereby express His agape love to others. This is how it all works: His life for you, His life in you, and His life through you. So He will do His part (and He is very thorough); you just need to be willing to open the door and leave it open. And, by the way, you don't need to try and do the work for Him and you cannot rush the process. He does all things according to His timing so just let it happen.

### ***Ephesians 4:3***

In love....being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Spirit continues to focus us on what our relationships will look like if we trust ourselves to Jesus. This passage speaks to us both near and far. Near in the sense of the unity that He desires for us know in our own fellowship and far in the unity that we are to experience with other believers outside of our respective fellowships. This passage is also a follow on statement to the unity that is to exist regardless of whether one is a Gentile or a Jew.

***Ephesians 2:14-15***

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace

Jesus is our peace and is the bond that keeps us together in the unity which He has already established. He has made us into one new man; therefore, our job is to be diligent to maintain that bond. It is important to understand that we are not the ones to create unity (He's done it); we can only be about not letting the seeds of division be planted in our hearts which will tear against our living in unity.

Let's think about this from the perspective of passage division. If the Spirit focuses us first on our need to deal with each other in humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance in love, and secondly on our need to live in unity, then you have to know that these are two areas where the enemy is constantly working to wreak destruction. These are the two areas where he focuses his attack and does everything he can to ensure that **love** and **unity** are not the fruits which flow from our lives. The enemy knows that if he can damage us in these two areas that others will be wholly unimpressed with Christianity. He knows that although it might take some time (centuries even), eventually Christianity will become so fractionalized and contentious that the world at large will simply not believe because they will have no real reason to believe.

***Matthew 5:13***

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

The enemy's goal is interfere with our relationships so we deal with each other out of our wounds and dysfunctional methods of self-protection and in effect become these lukewarm neutered Christians, which have a lot of "God" words but not a lot of His agape love to share with others. The enemy knows full well that if we trust ourselves to Jesus, we will **love** each other and we will live in **unity** and the world will sees this miracle and come to believe that Jesus came from God.

***John 13:34-35***

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

***John 17:20-21***

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

Let's think of just a few ways the enemy has sown his seeds of discord and disruption in the body of Christ:

1. Christianity has been fractionalized to such an extent that there are actually 39,000 different Christian denominations in the world with 3,684,000 different centers of worship and over 27,000 para-church organizations, each with their own take on what is or is not the "truth." This is mindboggling. If you are the type of person who believes there is "truth" and desires to know "truth" you can go crazy trying to figure it out. The enemy uses all this confusion to cast doubt on both the notion that there is "truth" to be found and on the omnipotence of God. After all, where is He in all of this? How can He be ok with all this confusion? Why doesn't He do something?

2. The enemy has placed enmity between men and women in the body of Christ and our relationships are fractured. People live in such fear of immorality that they have devised rules to "ensure" that it does not happen. Unfortunately, anytime we make rules and return to the law we get exactly the opposite effect of what we intended, for the law provokes sin (**Romans 7:8**). As we tighten the reins in an attempt to control behavior we actually entice the flesh and give sin place in our lives. That is why the Bible says that if walk in the Spirit (in our *New Nature*) we will not carry out the deeds of the flesh (**Galatians 5:1**). So the answer to sin has never been rules but has always been found in our trusting Jesus with our lives because He does not sin; and, if He fills us, we also will not live in sin.

But since we have not let this truth be authoritative over our lives, we have strangled the life out of relationships. The rules have people walking around



---

church so paranoid that godly fellowship amongst men and women is hardly experienced. This is not **love** and in our rules there is no **unity** in the Spirit. We have believed the lies of the enemy and have choked the life out of our relationships. Again, that is why so many in the world look at our lives and say, “why in the world would I ever want to be like that.”

3. The enemy has placed enmity between races which carries over into our churches.

4. The enemy has placed enmity between people of different economic and social status. If you have spent even a few moments in any youth group this division will be one of the first things that hits you square in the eyes.

5. The enemy has also placed enmity between close friends by tempting us to be consumed with ourselves. For example, you may want to open the doors of your soul and let Jesus in, but the enemy gets you to shut down by overwhelming you with fear and intimidation and just sheer exhaustion thinking about the amount of work that needs to be done. If he can get you to focus on you he wins (at least for the moment) and you are unable to even see the needs of others much less care for them.

I am sure there are so many more examples of the ways the enemy attempts to corrupt the **love** and **unity** which is to be experienced in the body of Christ but honestly, that is neither here nor there. The problems I described are just fruits—just indications that for whatever reason (whether fear or the lies of the enemy) we have not trusted ourselves to Jesus. Sure, we need to be aware of the enemy’s plans and schemes so we do not fall into the traps, but that is as far as it should go. We are instead to fix our minds on all the reasons we can trust ourselves to

Jesus. Remember, if we become filled with the fullness of Christ we will live in **unity** and we will deal with each other on the basis of His **love**, for **love** and **unity** belong to Him and are expressed by Him.

### ***Ephesians 4:4-5***

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

There is one body. Even though Christians have put on many different clothes and over the centuries have added layers and layers and layers such that everyone looks and behaves so completely different, nonetheless, we are still members of one body of whom Jesus is the head. And each of us belongs to His body in a very unique way and the body is not complete without our unique little part. Do you understand now why you are so important to Christ and how all of this is very personal? His body needs you and despite all the ridiculous ways in which we have divided ourselves according to all our own forms and practices of Christianity, we belong to each other and are supernaturally connected. To me this speaks to the amazing length, height, width and depth of the love and glory of God.

That is why I really love events like the national day of prayer. That may seem odd coming from me, but I love when everyone remembers that we belong to God. In those moments it does not matter what denomination someone belongs to or in what ministry they serve, all that matters is that we collectively identify

ourselves as children of God before a nation that desperately needs God.

There is one spirit. The Holy Spirit of God, who lives in all of us, is the one who makes this supernatural connection between believers real. I remember one time I was in Taiwan and I met this woman at a business meeting and instantly I knew that she was a believer. The Spirit in me leaped and instantly connected with the Spirit in her. We were drawn together in Jesus; it was amazing. Later I asked her if she was a believer; and, of course, she said yes and we were able to talk about Jesus. It was so cool. It did not matter to me what her religious experience was, what denomination she came from, or anything like that; all that mattered was that she belonged to Jesus. And after about 3 weeks of traveling through Asia where fellowship was sparse, talking to her was like drinking a glass of cold water on a hot blistering day as fellowship in Jesus is refreshing to the soul.

There is one hope. All believers share the living hope of what will take place at the appearing of Jesus Christ (***Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 1:3-5***). One day when He appears He will transform these bodies of flesh and give us new bodies, spiritual bodies, and we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is (***1 John 3:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18***). This is the hope laid up for us in heaven (***Colossians 1:5***).

### ***Romans 8:23-25***

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope

---

that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

***Titus 2:12-14***

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

***1 Peter 1:13-14***

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

This hope is to always be before us and provide for us the motivation and perspective for how we are to live with other believers. After all, this is marvelous news in terms of our ***loving*** each other and living in ***unity***; for one day everything which causes division will be gone, for we will be like Jesus. So in anticipation of that hope, through the one Spirit, we are able to live in unity and deal with each other on the basis of humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance in love.

One Lord. God made Jesus both Lord and Christ (***Acts 2:36***). He is both supreme in authority (which is what the Greek word “Kurios” or “Lord” means) and the

Messiah, the promised Savior (which is what “Christ” means). Now take these two concepts and apply them to the work that God wants to do in your heart.

First of all, being supreme in authority—the one Lord—means that ultimately He is responsible for all that He has allowed to come into your life—every bit of it—for no one can supplant His will. His authority is the authority. No powers or authorities, including Satan himself, can claim any right or title above the one who is seated in the heavenly places far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in the world or in the world to come. And God has put all things under the authority of Christ (***Ephesians 2:20-22; Hebrews 2:8***). Thus, nothing can happen to the life of a believer which Jesus has not specifically allowed for in His sovereignty He is both the gate and the gatekeeper of His sheep (***John 10:7, 9***).

### ***Psalm 103:19***

The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.

A lot of people don't like to think of Jesus as being absolutely supreme in authority because then they have to take the next logical step and consider that God has allowed some horrific things to take place both to their lives and to otherwise “innocent” and unsuspecting people. They don't see how God could be behind such tragedies. Thus, they tend to believe that the world just turns and evil just happens and Satan just does his thing.

---

Unfortunately, no matter how much emotion a person expresses in this belief, there is nothing in the word of God that even intimates or hints that things just happen to believers. In fact, it is 100% opposite. Every book in the Bible is a beautiful love story of God's hands-on involvement in the personal affairs of men and women. In every book He is clearly depicted as the one in full control of all events and the one Supreme Sovereign who is behind everything that happens—both blessing and calamity.

***Isaiah 45:6-7***

That there is no one besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other, The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these.

Whether God allows all things, causes all things, or does all things in our lives is really just semantics for He is in control. For example we know that when it comes to believers that Satan and his minions (as well as people who are controlled by them) are just tools to effect the will of God. We see this in book of ***Job, 1 Samuel 16:14, 18:10, 19:9, 1 Kings 22:20-23; and 2 Corinthians 12:7-10***. For example, Satan had to ask permission even to just tempt Peter to deny Christ (***Luke 22:31***).

And although the enemy desires to hurt us and destroy us (***John 10:10***), he can only move within the authority that our Dad specifically grants Him. And since God works all things after the counsel of His will (***Ephesians 1:11***), He is able to causes all things, even our failure, to work out for our good. He takes what Satan

does and uses it as an opportunity to conform us into the image of His Son (**Romans 8:28-30**). Again, using Peter as our example, Jesus used Peter's failure to teach him that no matter how hard he tried, no matter how pure his motives, he could not be good, for only God is good. Jesus taught Peter that he would therefore have to rely on Christ in him in order to do the things that God had asked him to do (**John 21:15-19**).

You see everything that He allows in His wisdom is love for our lives; we just need to learn to see from His eyes and not from ours. Remember, His wisdom is not our wisdom and His ways are far above ours (**Isaiah 55:8-9**). Therefore, even if you don't like this truth, it is truth nonetheless; as there is not one single passage in the Bible says otherwise. We must bow our wisdom to His!

With that said, God is the one who is ultimately responsible for having allowed others to inflict us with wounds. It was necessary. Without our wounds, we would have never been quickened to even consider God. Thus, His allowing us to be hurt is one of the most gracious and loving things He has ever done for us.

Remember, before God moved over our lives we were dead men who had no desire for God. In fact, the Bible makes it clear that we were so darkened by evil that on our own we would not even thank God for the rain which He provides—the rain which produces the crops we eat. Not even a simple thank you for His blessings (**Romans 1, 2, 3:9-18; Ephesians 2:1-3, 11-12**). This is why God's blessing on our lives rarely leads a person to want Jesus; however, there is one thing that seems to always get humans in touch with eternity and the idea that there might be a God and we might actually need His help, and that is pain. It is amazing, but when any kind of tragedy hits, people seem to be the most open to the idea of a

God who might be willing to help.

Therefore, God uses what the devil intends for harm for our good. Once the circumstances of our lives cause us to consider God, once we have a crack in the hardness of our heart, He starts to show us who He is and how much He loves us. It's as if once He has our attention, He can then start to do the work of healing the wounds that were necessary for us to turn to Him in the first place. Do you see how it can be love? And I know that since our Dad is so intimate with us and knows every hair on our heads (**Matthew 10:30**), He only allows what is absolutely necessary for Him to accomplish His purposes; not a single thing more. He does not want us to be hurt, but He will do what is necessary; and for some of us it takes a lot.

So first of all, He is absolutely supreme over all things. Second, he is also the Christ, the Messiah, the one who saves. He not only saves us from eternal destruction, He literally saves us from ourselves. That is why He knocks and seeks entrance into the rooms of your heart. He wants to completely heal the wounds which He created and thereby establish His rule and authority in your life and ground you in His love (**Deuteronomy 32:39; Ephesians 3:17**). "Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproveth, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For He inflicteth pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal" (**Job 5:17-18**). See also: **John 9:1-3; Job 5:18; Psalm 147:3, Isaiah 30:26, 42:24; Jeremiah 30:14, 31:18, 42:10**.

Take comfort in the fact that there is only one Lord because you belong to Him and what He has done in order to save your life is beyond imagination. The Father has moved time and space and used everything at His disposal in order to ensure



---

that you not only come to Him but that you learn to live through Him.

One Faith. This is an absolute statement which excludes every system of belief other than that proffered by the one Lord. Thus, it does not matter what anyone else says or what supernatural experience they have; there is only one faith or one truth on which we are to bet our lives and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. To put the meat on the bone, so to speak, Paul says it this way: “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed” [*or eternally damned*] (**Galatians 1:8-9**)! There is one faith and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ which is summarized in this **4:4-5**.

One Baptism. Now it is important to understand that this is not addressing the practice of believers being “baptized” in water or even Christ’s water baptism. Rather, this is a direct reference to Jesus’ work of atonement on the cross which He referred to as His baptism (**Mark 10:38-39**). In other words, there is only one way by which a man can be saved and that is through identifying with the finished work of Christ on the cross. We do this through belief—through placing our faith in Jesus Christ (**Romans 6:1-11**). One baptism means that only His work is sufficient. Thus, there is nothing we can do to earn our way into God’s graces; it’s all about what He has done. That is why our physically baptism in water is only a symbol representing the baptism that we have undergone in our souls.

**One God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.** This is the climax so to speak of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through one Lord, and one Baptism, the one God and Father of all, who is supreme **over** all, lives **in** every

believer and actually lives **through** every believer, which is why Jesus says in **John 14:14** that if we ask anything in His name, He will do it. He will literally be the one who fulfills the Father's will in and through our lives. As Paul says:

***Galatians 2:20***

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

This is the gospel of Jesus Christ and the mystery of true Christianity: His life for yours, His life in yours, and His life through yours. It has never been about what you can do for God (remember, only God is good and you are not), but always only about what He has done for you and what He will do as He lives His life through you. And as we are filled more and more with the fullness of Christ, He is expressed more fully through our lives; therefore, we will **love** and we will live in the **unity** which He has established.

Let's Pray

Diagram 1

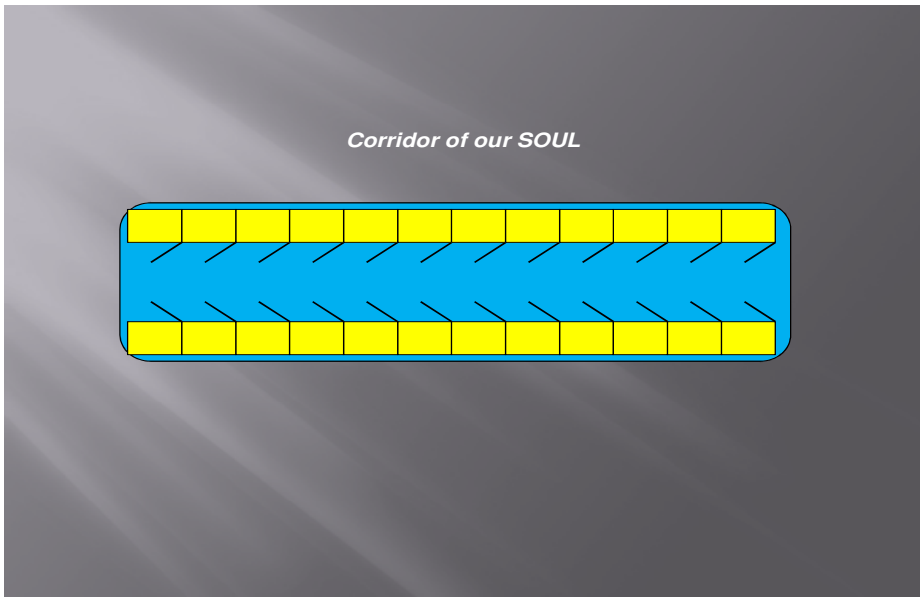


Diagram 2

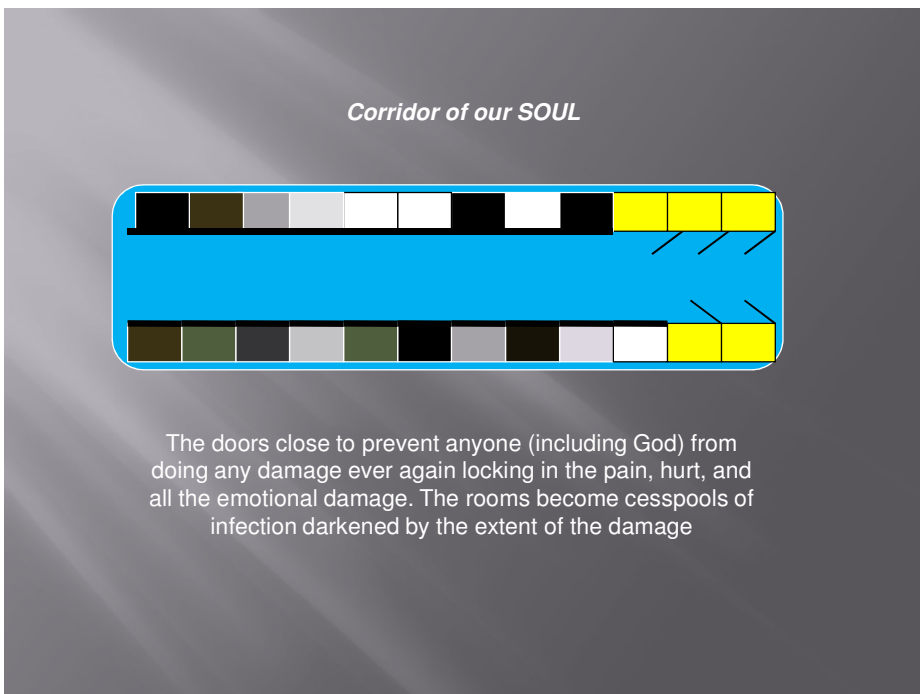


Diagram 3

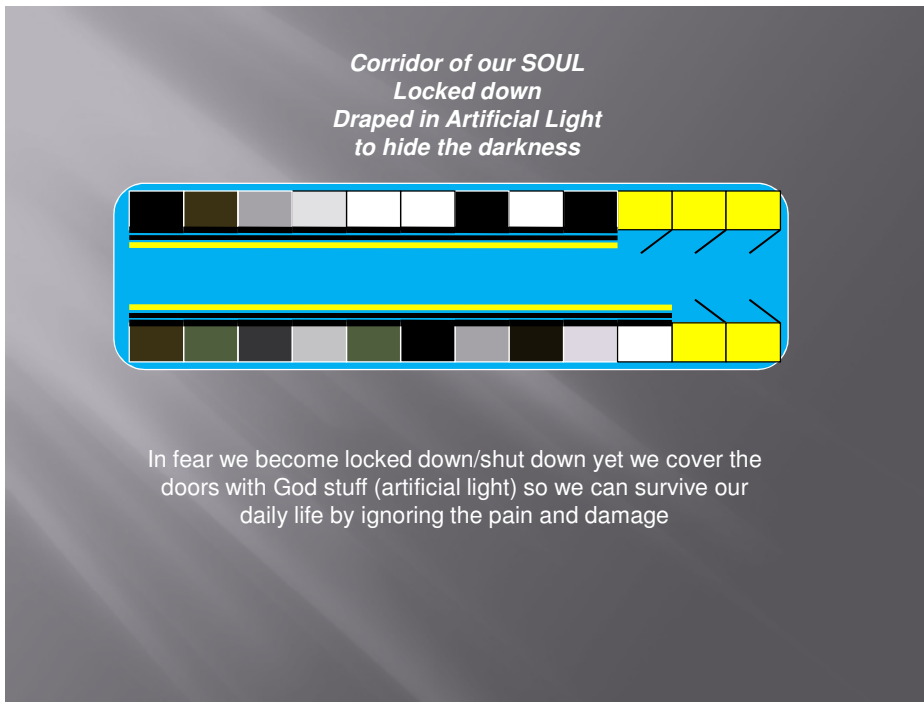


Diagram 4

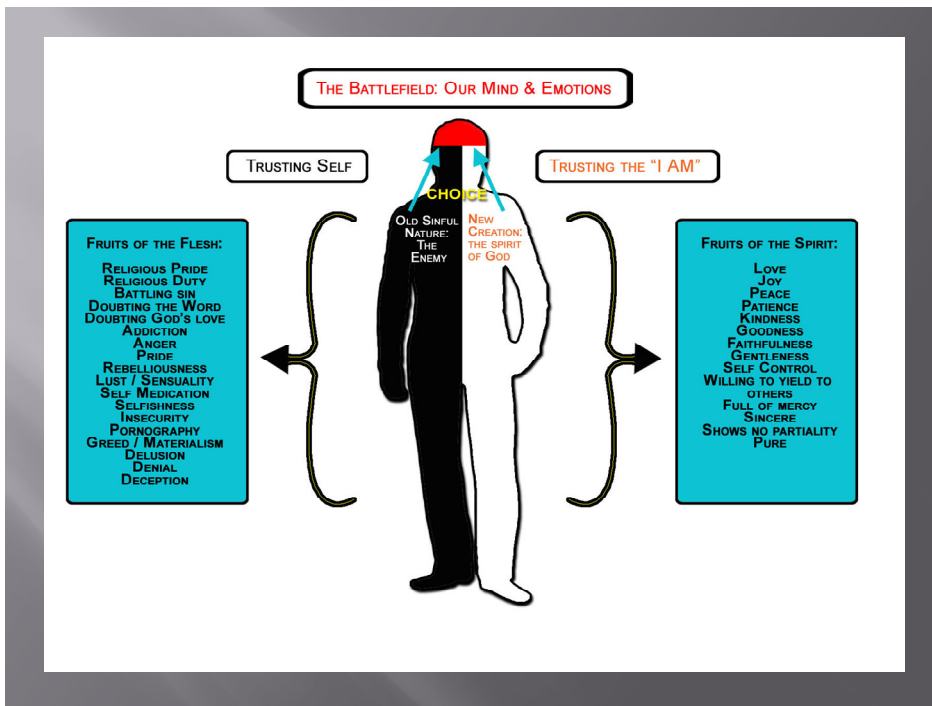


Diagram 5

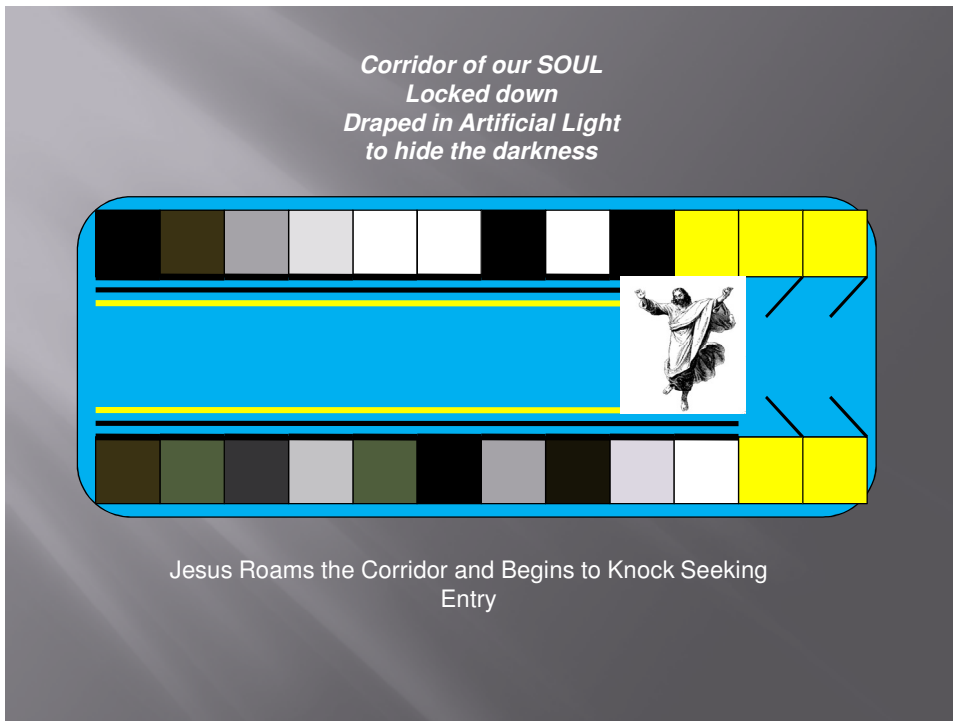


Diagram 6

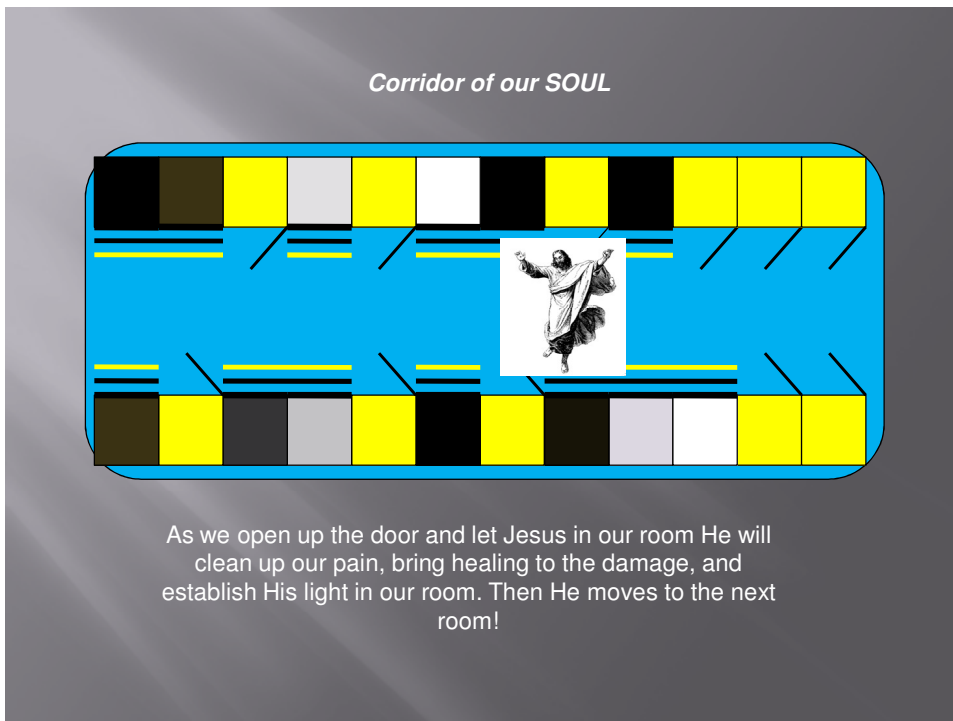


Diagram 7

