

Sam. Popoola

“And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations” Ex.30: 17-21.

The laver of brass is a brass bowl; it is the second furniture in the tabernacle worship. The entire tabernacle graphic display depicts a Christian journey into perfection, the realm of fullness in Christ. The layout of the furniture is a display in type, of the steps that if followed, there is consistent progressive moving forward towards attaining the ultimate in Christ. The laver is made of brass to typify that this second point of progression in Christ is also a place of judgement; judgement not in the sense of being condemned for **“there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”** Rom.8: 1. However, the self-life of the soul man must be willingly given up at this point if there must be a further progression in the things of the Spirit. The laver itself consists of women’s looking glasses that were first broken before they could be remoulded into a washing or cleansing laver. Looking glasses represent human vanities of life: human ego, ambitions, pride and lusts. They represent all misplaced and misrepresented values, the world allurements and the entire system of worldly vanities. Among many lessons in the type of this furniture, it must be rightly observed that a man can become a vessel or instrument or medium of cleansing in the hands of God however bad he may have been if he is willing to give-up the self-life. There can be many aspects of our self-life, which are not outright sinful. They can, as a matter of fact, appear legitimate, or at least appear to be our asset for self defence or self preservation; the truth is, there cannot be a moving further than the place of encounter with the reality of a willing giving-up of everything called self. As long as the self-life is active, there will always be things to protect or preserve. The ego, the position, the consciousness of personal integrity, self-interest, all must die if the things of Christ must be resurrected in us. It was written of Christ **“who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously...”** I Pet 2:22-23. This is what the Holy Spirit accomplishes in us when we submit to His workings in the type of the brass laver. Paul writing to the Corinthian Church said, **“being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat”** I Cor.4: 12-13. Encounter with the brass laver in type and shadow should produce such effect in us. When the self-life is dead, we can no longer **“react”** or **“respond”** to things that tamper with our self-integrity for it no longer exists.

It is then that we can confidently declare:

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth 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.

The fact that the looking glasses had to be broken for it to be turned into a vessel of cleansing is to teach the lesson in brokenness. When all pride, human ego and self-ambitions are become dead, what we see is brokenness. Brokenness is part of the lessons in the **“bread of communion”**. **“The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me”** I Cor.23-24. We become a blessing to other members of the ecclesia or even to humanity when we are truly broken. Bread gives life. To become bread to feed the hungry we must first be broken. Life can only flow out of brokenness. **“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise”** Ps.34: 18; 51: 17. The way to victory by Gideon and his army was simple: **“he divided three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man’s hand, with EMPTY PITCHERS, AND LAMPS WITHIN THE PITCHERS. And he said unto them, look on me, and do likewise: and behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do... So Gideon, and the three hundred men that were with him,... blew the trumpets, AND BRAKE THE PITCHERS THAT WERE IN THEIR HANDS...”** Judges7: 17-20. Every man in Gideon’s army is a pitcher that must be broken. If the pitcher is broken, then the lamp that was within the broken pitcher will give its light; and then the trumpet message of God’s purposes, to bring the camp of all of man’s enemy forces into complete subjection and defeat, must but sound. Every man who must go on increasing in the things of the Spirit will not only learn the lesson in brokenness, he must be totally broken! The physical bread or the physical **“wine”** of communion have no life in themselves. The life they have is the lessons they teach and the life which is wrought in us sequel to our obedience to the lessons. If no lesson is learnt, bread and **“wine”** of communion can be taken a million times, the partaker and the things of communion he partakes in, are all as good as dead without life in them. The question as this song of consecration asks is, **“will you be poured out like wine upon the altar for me? Will you be broken like bread to feed the hungry? Will you be sold out to Me that I may do just as I will? To become light and life and love, My word fulfilled”**. Our answer is to be **“yes, I’ll be poured out like wine...I will be broken like bread... I will be sold out for you...”**

Inside the brass laver, is the water of cleansing. The first furniture, the brazen altar, speaks of our justification. Justification means to be made just as if the justified had never sinned. It means to render, show, regard or declare just or innocent. It means acquittal. Justification is not through performance or observance of religious rites or active involvement or participation in religious activities. There can be a lot of self deception in: feeling **“secure”** and feeling **“rapturable”** or feeling **“heavenly”** or feeling of being a right candidate for **“heaven”** just because of being an active member in several religious activities in the **“Church”**.

It may even be because of being very close to the **“General overseer”**, or because of being a **“deacon”**, or an **“elder”** or because of some demonstrable ability in some moral values or because **“I fast often”** or **“give regular offerings”** to the **“Church”** and to the **“Pastor”**. It can also be because **“I pay my tithes”** or because **“my prayers automatically receive heavens’ attention”** or any other claim that gives some false sense of **“spiritual”** attainment. All are but works! And no man can be justified by works! Justification is by faith! Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3: 28; 5: 1; Gal 3: 11,24. On the other hand, the second furniture or the brass laver is symbolic of Sanctification. Sanctification is the removing of the stains of sin that remained after Christ has been accepted into our lives. Sanctification is however not a once and for all process but a continuing experience for it is a priestly principle that shows the necessity to continually apply the Blood of Christ as a basis for our right standing with God. The medium of cleansing in the brazen laver is water. This is to emphasise the active roles played by the word and the Spirit in the act of sanctification. Water is both a type of the word as well as of the Holy Spirit. When the Lord Jesus Christ prayed for His disciples he said, **“I have given them thy Word...sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth”** John 17: 14,17. Paul comparing marital relationship with that between Christ and the Church said, **“...Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word...”** Eph.5: 25-26. And speaking about the plan of God for the nations through the gospel of grace he said, **“...ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost”** Rom.15: 16. Sanctification process continues from the point at which we yield to the gospel of salvation and are born again. This is so long as we continue to hear the word of truth, continue to yield to the Holy Spirit and the inner workings of the Spirit and as long as we continue living a consistent life of personal devotion in the place of prayers. No one can know better sanctification than the amount of the word that has become **“flesh”** in him, the depth of grasp with the unction of the Holy Spirit and the amount of personal devotedness in a life of prayers along the lines of divine mind and counsels. Sanctification gives the inner consciousness of **“holiness”** or a deep sense of a **“cleansing”** within. It is vital for effective fellowship with the Spirit and with the Son. It is vital for boldness, confidence, and faith. It is vital for victory over sin and over all satanic challenges. It is not to be seen as a doctrine in asceticism. Sanctification is not to be seen as something we attain because we conform to some dress codes, because we conform to certain physical appearance, or because we have obeyed certain denominational indoctrinations. Sanctification is an inner work; its effect becomes automatically evident on the outside. It is not the other way round. Jesus taught, **“there is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man...are ye so without understanding...? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart... that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man”** Mk.7: 15, 18-23.

If defilement takes place within, sanctification also takes place within and can only be effected by effective instruments of the word, the Holy Spirit and the personal devotion in a life of prayers as it facilitates consecratedness.

The brazen laver also depicts consecration. Consecration is the setting apart of a life that is already cleansed and is being cleansed for divine use. Consecration is separation. Consecration is entering into a covenant relationship with God to live our life for Him and no longer for ourselves. **“God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”**, Rom.6: 2. Peter said, **“forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God”**. I Pet.4: 1-2. Consecration is devotion at a deep level of personal commitment to a daily walk in obedience to the dictates and the instructions of the Spirit. Consecration implies: God first before and above any other however cherished, self-inclusive. Consecration implies a walk along the highway of the Spirit. Consecration is at personal expense and at personal risks a great many times. Consecration means one can no longer live one’s life as one wills but as one obeys every instruction of God through the Holy Spirit. Consecration implies abandoning personal plans and ambitions in favour of God’s. It is the voice of consecration that sings: **“it’s no longer I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me... In me.... Jesus is alive in me, it’s no I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me”** in line with Gal.2: 20. In consecration, the I and the me disappear and never to surface in whatever circumstance, however humbling and humiliating; it is now He alone that must be glorified. It is consecration that says, **“He must increase, but I must decrease”** John 3:30. My decrease may be as I am **“reviled”** but I have lost the power to **“revile” again**. My decrease may be as to take away my personal integrity. It may also be as I labour and another takes the glory. All that is important is that Christ alone is glorified. He must increase, but I must decrease!

The brazen laver also depicts baptisms. Baptisms depict act of entering into covenant relationships. Water baptism is particularly symbolic. It shows our declaration of loyalty and love and personal identification by some act of personal will. It is a public declaration that we have renounced the former things, which pertained to the old life and old life styles, and ways and, that we are fully declaring for Christ. It implies that we are becoming dead to sin but alive to God. It is a demonstration that we have a new life that we are now living in Christ Jesus. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is also symbolised. We are baptised with the Spirit to be empowered to live a life in the Spirit, which is typical of the life in the Holy place. There is a level of spiritual victory, which we can never know if we do not receive Holy Ghost Baptism. There is a limit as to how far we can travel in the things of the Spirit with the **“initial unction”**, which we received when we first believed. With the Holy Spirit Baptism, we are opened up to the limitless realms of glories in Christ. The fruits and the gifts of the Holy Spirit become ours. Our understanding of the word is greatly enhanced and anointing to live and to do is freely available. Baptism into Christ is also symbolised by the same furniture. When we are born again, the way becomes open for us to be baptised into the Body of Christ, so we become a member in particular.

Fulfilling the demands of the first two pieces of furniture of the tabernacle is the beginning of our spiritual journey in Christ. There is always a need to press forward. The first two pieces of furniture are on the **“outer Court”** We may meet all the demands of these two pieces of furniture and may still be involved greatly with religion. We have the need to press forward to deeper and higher experiences in Christ if our focus is to please him and be part of his ultimate purposes.