

# THREE STAGES



Anointed and Appointed by Ineke Hopgood

*"He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."*

John 14:21

*"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. This I command you, to love one another."*

John 15:12-17

In these simple words to his disciples ... not just the eleven gathered in the upper room ... but to all disciples of all time, Jesus explains how we can enter into the life of the kingdom of God here on this earth.

## **We enter the life of the kingdom in three stages:**

### **First, obey his commandment to love**

*"He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me....  
This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."*

It starts with commandments ... words ... from Jesus,  
that call us to radical love,

radical trust in him,

radical purity.



Dance with Me Oh love of My Soul

We don't really know Jesus yet, we just hear these words and we know they come from God. And we take hold of these commands which are so high and so wonderful ... so far above where we are ... and struggle to do them. Even when we fail and fall short --- still we know that this is the way we have to go.

*Oh Lord Jesus, may we love you so deeply that we have no choice but to keep your commandments, especially the commandment to love one another.*

And as we keep struggling to do Jesus' words we arrive at the second stage: friendship with Jesus.

## **Second, Friendship with Jesus**

*"He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."*

*"You are my friends if you do what I command you."*

*No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing;*

*but I have called you friends,*

*for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."*

.....friendship with Jesus.

Suddenly, in the midst of our struggle to obey his commands, Jesus comes to us and manifests himself to us as our friend. He's not just our Master --- he's our Friend who opens his heart to us and leads us into the very heart of God. Now the kingdom of God becomes for us much, much more than a set of wonderful commands.

- It's fellowship with God the Son ... heart-union with Christ so rich and so comforting that all our fears are driven out by this burning love of Jesus.

*Beloved Jesus, in our struggle to obey you. Manifest yourself to us. Become our dearest friend. Open your heart to us...lead us to the very heart of God.*

And in the power of that love we begin to love each other and to reach out to the wounded world.

Which is the third stage: fruit bearing.

## **Third, Fruit Bearing**

*"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that what-ever you ask the Father in my name he may give it to you. This I command you, to love one another."*

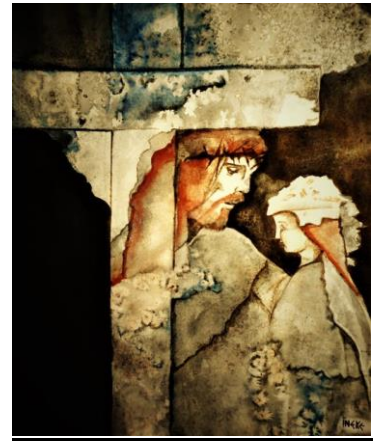
So now in union with Jesus,

- we're bearing fruit,
- we're asking the Father for life for others... and getting it,
- we're loving each other with the love of God.

Our friendship with Jesus moves us out into the world with

- life,
- healing,
- prophetic words,
- signs of hope,
- power to overcome evil,
- power to set the captives free.

*Jesus in the power of your love and friendship, pour life into and out of us so we may bear abiding fruit. In your love... may life, healing, hope pour out of our lives and mouths, may captives be set free, may evil be overcome,*



Jesus



Abundant Fruit

## Three stages:

- 1. The commands of Jesus.**
- 2. Friendship with Jesus.**
- 3. Bearing fruit in the name of Jesus.**

In describing the kingdom life in this way we're not ignoring the cross. The cross of Jesus was the event which made these things possible ... the fountainhead from which all this life springs. And as we walk with Jesus we learn to know him --- not only in the power of his resurrection, but in the fellowship of his sufferings we become like him in his death as we lay down our lives.

But we only begin to see the power of Jesus' death and resurrection as we come to know Jesus himself in these three stages.

"You keep talking about Jesus as if it's possible to know him in a personal way here on earth, yet scripture tells us that Jesus is at the headquarters of the uni-verse in heaven ... that we are to look for his return.

So how can he be 'here' and 'there' at the same time?"

*"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."*

*John 16:12-15*

Jesus promised that he would send the Holy Spirit to stay on this earth until he (Jesus) returns and that the Spirit will convey Jesus' presence, Jesus' life.

### **Where the Spirit is, Jesus is.**

So it is the Spirit, the living, burning Holy Spirit of God, who brings us along on these three stages....  
..... *as fast and as far as we allow.*

- It is the Spirit who wipes away the distance between earth and heaven, who opens our eyes and enables us to see the unseen.
- It is the Spirit who brings us into the first stage by causing the commands of Jesus to burn with fire in our hearts.
- It is the Spirit who brings us into the second stage by enabling us to truly know Jesus as our friend.
- It is the Spirit who leads us into the third stage by anointing us with power to bear fruit in his name.

*Jesus we need your Spirit to bring us along, to carry us into the life you call us to. Give us your Spirit so that our eyes are open and we can see the unseen. Give us your Spirit so that your commands burn within our hearts. Give us your Spirit so we can know you as our dear friend. Give us your Spirit so we are anointed with the power to bear fruit in your name. May we allow your Spirit to take us faster and deeper not holding back anymore.*

**So, the first stage becomes the call of the Spirit.**

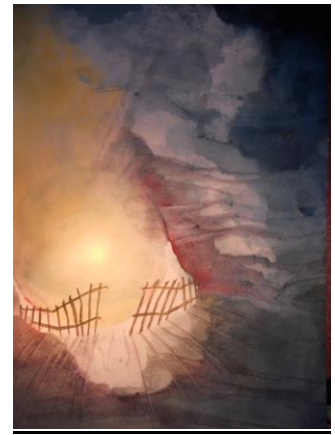
The Spirit calls us through the words of Jesus.

***"It is the Spirit that gives life. The flesh is of no avail.  
The words that I have spoken to you, they are Spirit and they are life."***

So we hear Jesus' words spoken by someone, or we read the Sermon on the Mount in the Bible, or we wake up in a crisis and recall one sentence or one phrase from his mouth.

And we grab hold of those words.

"That's what I want! I want to make those words real in my life!"



*Breaking A Barrier*

We may not realize it at the time, but this is the Holy Spirit calling us out of darkness into God's light. The Spirit is quickening the words of Jesus to our minds and wills. And as we struggle with those words trying to do them ... and perhaps failing ... and wondering how in the world he can ever expect us to live them, we're starting to love Jesus---*starting* to love him.

*Oh Lord may we hear the call of your Spirit like never before. May that call draw us close to you, may we grab hold of your words. May love for you pour into our hearts as we realize the truth and beauty of your words.*

**The second stage becomes the baptism of the Holy Spirit.**



*There is a Fire Burning in my Bones*

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is when we are flooded and filled and overwhelmed by the love of Jesus ... when we really begin to know Jesus as our friend.

***To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."***

*Acts 1:3-5*

And when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit they knew the friendship of Jesus from within ... they knew Jesus as they never knew him before.

And for anyone reading this to whom this hasn't happened yet,

- you should expect it,
- ask for it,
- open your heart to receive it.

John baptized with water ... Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

He floods you with the life of God and specific things begin to happen to you.

- Suddenly Jesus is right there and you know that he's your friend he's with you, he loves you, his hand is on you.
- And with that wonderful awareness of the presence of Jesus, the scriptures open. Things in the Bible that never made sense before now begin to fit together.
- Prayer begins to flow from you with a freedom and a power you never knew before.
- Your tongue is set free and you find yourself giving testimony to Jesus.

Perhaps there are some people reading these words to whom this all happened some years ago, but now it's like a fire that has almost gone out.

- Stir it up!
- Put some kindling on it.
- Get down on your knees and coax it until those coals which are almost out ..  
begin to glow once more and burst into flame.

The Holy Spirit was given to you so that you could know Jesus and love Jesus and serve Jesus, not just for a year-and-a-half, but forever.

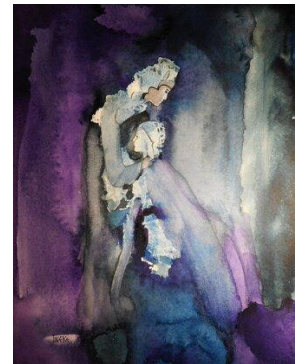
*Lord Jesus, flood us, overwhelm us with your love. Flood us with life. Open our hearts to the beauty, power and truth of your scriptures. Relax us into the tender embrace of your friendship... so that we can coax back to life even the tiniest of flames, so that our prayers unleash holy power, so our tongues are finally set free.*

### **The third stage becomes walking in the Spirit.**

*"If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit,"*

- You've been baptized in the Spirit,
- You've been brought into union with Jesus,
- ... so now you can do those commands which before were im-possible.

You can love your enemy,  
you can go the second mile,  
you can be pure,  
you can get rid of your grudges.



Restoration

Now it's not simply friendship with Jesus out in the desert away from the hassles, now it's friendship with Jesus *in the midst* of the pressures, confusion, and trials of life.

*"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should abide. So that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give it to you ... "*

**...." even power to obey the commandment to love one another."**

*Lord may we be so filled with the power of the Spirit..that we walk with you at all times. May we step forward willing to go the second mile, committed to loving our enemies, letting go of our grudges, May we walk in the power and confidence of your friendship in the midst of all things. Thank you dear Lord for choosing us, anointing us, drawing close to us and giving us the gift of bearing fruit.*

And so we go out into the world in unity with each other.

- We go out with prayer in our hearts.
- We speak those same gracious words of Jesus that drew us into the kingdom.
- We speak those words under the authority of the Spirit.
- We speak them as friends of Jesus who are walking with Jesus and know Jesus.

And people are drawn just as we were drawn ... *we bear fruit.*

Each of us may be in the kingdom of God at one of these stages..... right now.

- At very least we can take hold of Jesus' commands and start to do them by answering the *call of the Spirit*.
- We can enter into friendship with Jesus by *opening our hearts to the power of the Spirit*.
- We can get under the yoke with Jesus and start to *bear fruit by walking in the Spirit*.

Consider these words from John 15 one more time ... remember that these words of Jesus are addressed to us today. And as we respond to them we will certainly experience the life of the kingdom of God.

***"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.***

***This I command you, to love one another."***

***John 15:12-17***



*Ministry*

*Original sermon 1982 REB. This is found in the booklet "LOVE"... which can be mailed out upon request.  
All art from the generous heart of Ineke Hopgood inekhopgood.weebly*

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