

# Sweating For Bread

Valley Center Seventh-day Adventist Church

Written By: Pastor John T. Anderson

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Paul writes, “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 love.” Galatians 3:13, 14.

When sin entered through disobedience, there were consequences. The Lord visited the Garden and informed Adam, the woman and the serpent of what was to take place because of transgression. After speaking to the serpent and to Eve, the Lord addressed the man.

“Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you saying, “You shall not eat of it”: cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; and dust you are, and to dust you shall return.’” Genesis 3:17-19.

Even back then, immediately after the Fall, it appears that Adam would be capable of working to the point of perspiring. It was in the “cool of the day” that the Lord gave this indictment, but Adam would soon learn about the sweat that labor brings. Later, after the Flood which was the third curse on the earth (the curse of Cain being the second one), even more extremes in temperature would result from certain changes that happened to the earth during the Deluge.

Sweating for bread; that’s what disobedience brought to Adam. It was part of the curse of sin. Something valuable, something life-giving would require hard work to produce. It’s interesting to consider that bread baking would have been part of the human experience from the very beginning. This would have involved all the necessary ingredients for the process to have been completed, including planting, harvesting, threshing, grinding, mixing, kneading and baking.

The point we’re considering today is not about Adam and his making bread, but the “Last Adam,” also called the “Second Adam,” Who is the Lord of all, Jesus Christ. It is written, that He became a curse for us to redeem us from the curse. Every part of the curse uttered in Eden, including the

sentence against the serpent and that given to Eve, Christ took upon Himself in some way; in a greater way. When He pronounced judgment against sin in Eden, He was prophesying what He Himself would experience to save us from sin.

Part of that was sweating for bread. We've all sweated when working, haven't we? I can remember perspiring so freely that my glasses became so wet that I couldn't see. I had to spend more time drying them than I could doing the actual work. I can remember sweating so much that I had trouble retaining a grip on the framing hammer I was swinging.

In what way did Christ sweat for bread? When He was born into the human family, He inherited the full compliment of human frailties. He knew what hunger was, as he fasted for 40 days in the wilderness before He began His ministry. He knew what thirst was as He hung on the cross at the close of His journey. He knew what fatigue was, trudging the countless miles in His sojourn, up one dusty path and down another. It is written that He slept in the ship crossing Galilee; that He sat at the well of Jacob, "being wearied from His journey." John 4:6. Yes, Jesus knew all about the human condition of physical weakness.

But the particular fulfillment of Eden's curse relating to "sweating for bread," would come as Jesus labored for the victory in another Garden, the Garden of Gethsemane. The fate of the world, indeed the universe, hung in the balance as a very real battle took place that Thursday night. Christ's human nature shrunk from the ordeal. He wished for Himself that He might escape the trial that awaited Him. His humanity desperately sought another way. His agony on this matter reached such intensity that He perspired drops of blood.

Matthew records that He said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death," as He prayed, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me." Matthew 26:38, 39. Mark tells us that "He began to be troubled and deeply distressed" as He began to pray. Mark 14:33. But it is Doctor Luke who informs us that "being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Luke 22:44.

And why was He in such agony? For what purpose was it that He struggled so intensely? It was to procure salvation for us, wasn't it. It was so that we could have the bread of life. It was so that we could have hope for an eternity with Him, a life immeasurable. He took the curse of Adam and gave us the blessing of His life. That Thursday evening He invited His disciples to partake of the Passover loaf, even as He would soon be sweating for the bread which gives eternal life. He gave to them the cup of blessing while He soon would be drinking from the cup of woe. The victory was won when He declared, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done." Luke 22:42.

It is to His glory that we partake of these emblems today; the cup which is a symbol of His blood, the bread which is a symbol of His body. What a marvelous sacrifice for the King to come and give

His life! It is for our admonition and hope that we share in this Communion, according to His command, looking forward to being able to enjoy it with Him in the kingdom. In these last hours of earthly probation, it is not time to become slack in our commitment. It is not time to ease off and become distracted by the devil's enchantments. It is time that we recommit ourselves to Him; time that we surrender ourselves to Him completely and let Him do that work, through His Spirit, that He wishes to do. May God bless us to that end.