

WEEK 3 — OUTLINE

Serving God in Our Spirit in the Gospel of His Son

Scripture Reading: Rom. 1:1, 9; 15:16

« DAY 1 »

- I. For all the requirements related to the believers revealed in the New Testament, especially that of announcing the gospel of God, we need to receive the divine supply of the Body through the dispensing of the processed Triune God (Eph. 3:2; Heb. 4:16; Rom. 5:17, 21; John 7:37-38; Acts 6:4; Phil. 1:5-6, 19-25).**
- II. We need to see that our service to God in the gospel is our worship to God; in the New Testament, serving God is actually the same as worshipping God (Matt. 4:9-10; S.S. 1:2; cf. Psa. 2:11-12):**
- A. Paul says that the believers in Thessalonica “turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God” (1 Thes. 1:9):
1. God must be living to us and in us in every aspect of our daily life; the fact that God controls, directs, corrects, and adjusts us, even in such small things as our thoughts and motives, is a proof that He is living (Phil. 1:8; 2:5, 13; 1:20).
 2. We live under the control, direction, and correction of a living God to be a pattern of the glad tidings that we spread (1 Thes. 1:5-8; 2:10; 2 Thes. 3:5).
- B. As believers in Christ, we must live a life in our spirit, which bears the testimony that the God whom we worship and serve is living in the details of our life; the reason we do not do or say certain things should be that God is living in us (Rom. 8:6, 16).

« DAY 2 »

- III. Paul says that he was “separated unto the gospel of God” (1:1), and he declares, “God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son” (v. 9):**
- A. The Greek word for serve in Romans 1:9 means “serve in worship,” as used in Matthew 4:10, 2 Timothy 1:3, Philippians 3:3, and Luke 2:37; Paul considered his preaching of the gospel as a worship and service to God, not merely a work.
- B. When we come to serve God, or worship God, we need a blood-purified conscience; our defiled conscience needs to be purified so that we may serve God in a living way (Heb. 9:14; 10:22; 1 John 1:7, 9; Acts 24:16; cf. 1 Tim. 4:7).

- C. To serve God in the gospel is to serve Him in the all-inclusive Christ, because the gospel is simply Christ Himself (Acts 5:42; Rom. 1:3-4; 8:29).
- D. In order to preach the gospel of God's Son, we must be in our regenerated spirit (1:9); in the book of Romans Paul stresses that whatever we are (2:29; 8:5-6, 9), whatever we have (vv. 10, 16), and whatever we do toward God (1:9; 7:6; 8:4, 13; 12:11) must be in our spirit.
- E. Paul served God in his regenerated spirit by the indwelling Christ, the life-giving Spirit, not in his soul by the power and ability of the soul; this is the first important item in his preaching of the gospel.

« DAY 3 »

- F. The gospel of God, unto which Paul was separated, is the subject of the book of Romans; the book of Romans may be regarded as the fifth gospel (1:1; 2:16; 16:25):
 1. The first four Gospels are concerning the incarnated Christ, Christ in the flesh, living among His disciples; the gospel in Romans is concerning the resurrected Christ as the Spirit living within His disciples (8:2, 6, 9-11, 16).
 2. We need the fifth gospel, the book of Romans, to reveal the subjective Savior within us as the subjective gospel of Christ.
 3. The central message of the book of Romans is that God desires to transform sinners in the flesh into sons of God in the spirit in order to constitute the Body of Christ expressed as the local churches (v. 29; 12:1-5; ch. 16).
 4. All of us need to function as priests of the gospel of God according to the revelation of the book of Romans; we need to learn the elements and details of the gospel, we need to experience the full content of the gospel, and we need to exercise our spirit to learn how to minister the gospel (15:16).

« DAY 4 »

IV. “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness” (John 4:24):

- A. To contact God the Spirit with the spirit is to drink of the living water, and to drink of the living water is to render real worship to God (vv. 10-14).
- B. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for sinners to believe into Him and drink of Him as the flowing Triune God in order for them to become the totality of eternal life, the New Jerusalem (3:16; 4:14b; cf. Jer. 2:13).

- C. According to typology, God should be worshipped in the place chosen by Him for His habitation (Deut. 12:5, 11, 13-14, 18) and with the offerings (Lev. 1—6); the place chosen by God for His habitation typifies the human spirit (Eph. 2:22), and the offerings typify Christ (Heb. 10:5-10).
- D. The divine reality is Christ as the reality of all the offerings of the Old Testament for the worship of God (John 14:6; 1:29; 3:14) and as the fountain of living water, the life-giving Spirit (4:7-15), partaken of and drunk by His believers to become the reality within them (1 Cor. 12:13; John 7:37-39).
- E. By enjoying Christ as the divine reality of the offerings in our spirit, He becomes our genuineness and sincerity (truthfulness) for the true worship of God (4:24).

V. “We are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3; cf. Rom. 2:28-29):

- A. The flesh refers to all that we are and have in our natural being; anything natural, whether it is good or evil, is the flesh (Phil. 3:4-6).
- B. As believers in Christ, we should not trust in anything that we have by our natural birth, for everything of our natural birth is part of the flesh.
- C. Even though we have been regenerated, we may continue to live in our fallen nature, boast in what we do in the flesh, and have confidence in our natural qualifications; therefore, it is important that we be deeply and personally touched by these verses in Philippians 3.
- D. We need the Lord’s light to shine on us concerning our nature, our deeds, and our confidence in the flesh; we need to be enlightened by the Lord to see that we still live too much by the flesh and that we boast in our deeds and qualifications.
- E. One day, when the light shines on us concerning this, we will want to prostrate ourselves before the Lord and confess how unclean our nature is; then we will condemn everything we do by our fallen nature; we will see that in the eyes of God whatever is done in the fallen nature is evil and worthy of condemnation.
- F. Formerly, we boasted in our deeds and qualifications, but the time will come when we will condemn the flesh with its qualifications; then we shall boast in Christ alone, realizing that in ourselves we have absolutely no ground for boasting.

G. Only when we have been enlightened by God shall we be able to say truly that we have no trust in our natural qualifications, ability, or intelligence; only then shall we be able to testify that our confidence is wholly in the Lord; after we are enlightened in this way, we shall truly serve and worship God in our spirit and by the Spirit.

« DAY 5 »

VI. In order to serve God in the gospel of His Son, we need to see that we are men in the flesh, worthy of nothing but death and burial; this is to follow the Lord's pattern to fulfill all righteousness and enter into the ministry of the age (Matt. 3:13-17; 21:32):

- A. The base for Jesus to be baptized is that He considered Himself, according to His humanity, a man, especially an Israelite, who was a man “in the flesh” (cf. Phil. 3:3; John 1:14); even though He was only “in the likeness of the flesh of sin” (Rom. 8:3), “without sin” (Heb. 4:15), yet He was “in the flesh,” which has nothing good but is worthy only of death and burial.
- B. Based on this fact, at the beginning of His ministry for God, He was willing to be baptized by John the Baptist, recognizing that, according to His humanity, He was one who did not have any qualification to be a servant of God.
- C. As a man in the flesh, He needed to be a dead man buried in the death water to fulfill God's New Testament requirement according to His righteousness, and He did it willingly, considering it the fulfilling of God's righteousness.
- D. This shows that we should not bring anything of our natural life, anything of our flesh, into God's ministry in the service of His gospel.
- E. We all should declare in our life and work, “I am a person in the flesh, worthy of nothing but death and burial, so I want to have myself terminated, crucified, and buried” (cf. Gal. 2:20a).

« DAY 6 »

VII. Our work and labor for the Lord in the gospel are not by our natural life and natural ability but by the Lord's resurrection life and power; resurrection is the eternal principle in our service to God (Num. 17:8; 1 Cor. 15:10, 58; 16:10):

- A. The life-giving Spirit is the reality of the Triune God, the reality of resurrection, and the reality of the Body of Christ (John 16:13-15; 20:22; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Eph. 4:4).

- B. Resurrection means that everything is of God and not of us, that God alone is able and that we are not able, and that everything is done by God and not by ourselves (Num. 17:8).
- C. All those who know resurrection have given up hope in themselves; they know that they cannot make it; everything that is of death belongs to us, and everything that is of life belongs to the Lord (2 Cor. 1:8-9; cf. Eccl. 9:4).
- D. We must acknowledge that we are nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing; we must come to the end of ourselves to be convinced of our utter uselessness (Exo. 2:14-15; 3:14-15; Luke 22:32-34; 1 Pet. 5:5-6).
- E. The resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit lives in us, enabling us to do what we could never do in ourselves (1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:8-9, 12; 4:7-18).
- F. When we do not live by our natural life but live by the divine life within us, we are in resurrection; the issue of this is the reality of the Body of Christ as the goal of the gospel of God (Phil. 3:10-11; Eph. 1:22-23).

<< WEEK 3 – DAY 1 >>

Morning Nourishment

Phil. 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

1 Thes. 1:9 For they themselves report concerning us what kind of entrance we had toward you and how you turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God.

The believers experience the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity in various...aspects, including serving and worshipping God, working and laboring for the Lord, not loving the world, overcoming Satan, fighting the good fight, running the course of the race, being profited by all things in their circumstances and environments, having the best attitude toward others, and watching and praying. For all of these matters we surely need the dispensing of the Divine Trinity. However, few Christians realize this. We need to see that in order to carry out these matters, we need God's divine supply, which comes to us through His divine dispensing. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 1827)

Today's Reading

For all the requirements related to the believers revealed in the New Testament we need to receive the divine supply through the divine dispensing of the processed Triune God....If we would meet what the New Testament requires of the believers, we need the divine supply, even the very essence of the Triune God.

In ourselves we cannot meet any of the divine requirements. For example, we cannot fulfill the requirement to worship God. Some may think that to worship God is easy and natural. Actually, no one can truly worship God without God's dispensing of His element into him. We cannot render to God the worship that satisfies Him, that is accepted by Him as a real pleasure to Him, apart from the dispensing of the divine essence into our being. But through this divine dispensing we can worship God in a way that satisfies Him.

In the New Testament serving God is actually the same thing as worshipping God. You cannot serve God without worshipping Him. Neither can you worship Him without serving Him. For instance, in Matthew 4 the Lord Jesus was tempted by the devil concerning worship. Referring to the kingdoms of the world and their glory, the devil said to Him, "All these will I give You if You will fall down and worship me" (v. 9). The Lord Jesus answered, "It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve" (v. 10). Here we see that to worship actually means to serve. Hence, to worship God is to serve God. Without serving God we cannot render real worship to Him.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:9b Paul says that the believers at Thessalonica "turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God." Literally, the Greek word rendered "serve" here means to serve as a slave. As used in verse 9, the word serve is all-inclusive. It includes everything we do in our daily living.

By our daily life we prove that God is living. If God were not living, our daily life would be very different from what it is. Our present living is a testimony that the God whom we serve is living. He is living in us, and He controls us, directs us, and deals with us. He will not let us go. Rather, in many matters He corrects us and adjusts us. The fact that God controls us and directs us, even in such small things as our thoughts and motives, is a proof that He is living. We live under the control, direction, and correction of a living God. As believers in Christ we must live a life which bears the testimony that the God we worship and serve is living in the details of our life. The proper Christian life should bear a testimony that God is living. The reason we do not do or say certain things should be that God is living in us. The God whom we worship and serve is living not only in the heavens but also in us. We have turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God. No doubt, when God is living to us in our experience, He is also true. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 1827-1830)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 168

« WEEK 3 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers.

Heb. 9:14 How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The Greek word [for “serve” in Romans 1:9 and Hebrews 9:14] means serve in worship; it is used in Matthew 4:10; 2 Timothy 1:3; Philippians 3:3; and Luke 2:37. Paul considered his preaching of the gospel a worship and service to God, not merely a work. (Rom. 1:9, footnote 1)

When we come to serve God, or worship God, we need to have a pure conscience, a conscience purified from dead works or from any kind of offense....Because Christ offered Himself by the eternal Spirit, His blood has an eternal efficacy to purify our conscience so that we may serve and worship the living God [Heb. 9:14].

The blood of Christ purifies our conscience to serve the living God. To serve the living God requires a blood-purified conscience. To worship in dead religion or to serve any dead thing rather than God does not require our conscience to be purified. The conscience is the leading part of our spirit. The living God, whom we desire to serve, always comes to our spirit (John 4:24) by touching our conscience. He is righteous, holy, and living. Our defiled conscience needs to be purified so that we may serve Him in a living way. To worship God in our mind religiously does not require this. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 1830)

Today's Reading

Hebrews 9:14 speaks of “dead works” and “the living God.” Because we were dead (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13), whatever we did, bad or good, was dead works in the sight of the living God....The blood of Christ...washes us from our sins (Rev. 1:5; 1 John 1:7) and purifies our conscience so that we may serve and worship the living God.

If we would serve God and worship Him, we must do this in our spirit for the preaching of the gospel. The New Testament service and worship are carried out in the preaching of the gospel. This gospel is not concerned with anything other than God's Son. The gospel of God's Son refers to the all-inclusive Christ. Therefore, to serve God in the gospel is to serve Him in the all-inclusive Christ. In the New Testament the gospel is simply Christ Himself. This is the reason Acts 5:42 says that the apostles were “announcing the gospel of Jesus as the Christ.”

In Romans 1:9a Paul said that he served God in his spirit. This indicates that in order to preach the gospel of God's Son, we must be in our spirit. Preaching the gospel depends on our spirit. Whenever we preach the gospel, we should exercise our spirit.

Only in the book of Romans does Paul say that he serves God in his spirit....Paul indicates that whatever we do toward God must be done in our spirit, that whatever we are must be in spirit, and that whatever we have must be in spirit. In 2:29 he says that the genuine people of God must be in spirit, that true circumcision is not outward in the flesh but in the spirit. Then in 7:6 he says that we should serve God in newness of spirit. Finally, in 12:11 Paul says that we must be burning in spirit. Preaching the gospel of God is absolutely a matter of our spirit. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 1830-1832)

["My spirit" in Romans 1:9 refers] not [to] the Spirit of God but [to] Paul's regenerated spirit. The spirit is different from the heart, soul, mind, emotion, will, or natural life. Christ and the Spirit are with the believers in their regenerated human spirit (2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:16)...Whatever we are (2:29; 8:5-6, 9), whatever we have (8:10, 16), and whatever we do toward God (1:9; 7:6; 8:4, 13; 12:11) must be in this spirit. Paul served God in his regenerated spirit by the indwelling Christ, the life-giving Spirit, not in his soul by the power and ability of the soul. This is the first important item in his preaching of the gospel. (Rom. 1:9, footnote 2)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1967, vol. 1, “The Service in the Church for the Expression of the Body,” ch. 2

« WEEK 3 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 1:1-3 Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, a called apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh.

The gospel of God in which we serve God in our spirit is actually the subject of the book of Romans. In the very first verse of this book Paul says that as a slave of Christ and a called apostle he was “separated unto the gospel of God.” This indicates that Paul’s intention in Romans is to write concerning the gospel. The entire book unfolds the gospel, the glad tidings of God, in its fullest way.

Paul refers to his Epistle to the Romans as a gospel. In 2:16 he says, “God judges the secrets of men according to my gospel through Jesus Christ.” Paul also believed that God would establish the saints according to his gospel: “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ” (16:25). Therefore, the book of Romans may be regarded as the fifth gospel. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 1832)

Today’s Reading

We should serve not only in our spirit but also in the gospel of the Son of God...The gospel of the Son of God...includes redemption, life, and the Body. Whenever we contact someone, we should sense whether or not he has experienced redemption. If he has, we should check whether or not he knows Christ as life. If he does, we should check whether or not he knows the Body. If this person knows the Body and has more experience of the Body than we do, we should submit ourselves to him in order to receive help from him. This is the proper way to serve the Lord in the spirit and in the gospel. (CWWL, 1967, vol. 1, “The Service in the Church for the Expression of the Body,” pp. 453, 457)

The gospel in the first four books of the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—concerns Christ in the flesh as He lived among His disciples before His death and resurrection. The gospel in Romans concerns Christ as the Spirit, not Christ in the flesh. In Romans 8 we see that the Spirit of life who indwells us is simply Christ Himself. Christ is in us. The Christ in the four Gospels was among the disciples; the Christ in Romans is within us. The Christ in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is the Christ after incarnation and before death and resurrection. As such, He is a Christ outside of us. The Christ in Romans is the Christ after His resurrection. As such, He is the Christ within us. Hence, the gospel in Romans concerns Christ as the Spirit in us after His resurrection. This Christ is deeper and more subjective than the Christ in the four Gospels.

If we have only the gospel concerning Christ as revealed in the first four books of the New Testament, our gospel is too objective. We need the fifth gospel, the book of Romans, to reveal the subjective gospel of Christ...The book of Romans is the gospel of Christ after His resurrection, revealing that He is now the subjective Savior in His believers. Therefore, this gospel is deeper and more subjective.

The gospel of God concerns God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord...The central point of the gospel is the very person of Christ, the Son of God. The gospel is not a doctrine nor a teaching nor a religion—it is a wonderful person, Jesus Christ, the Son of God with His divinity and His humanity.

The central message of the book of Romans is that sinful, fleshly people can be made sons of God and conformed to the image of the Son of God. In this way Christ becomes the Firstborn among many brothers (8:29). Thus, the central point of the gospel is not forgiveness of sins. It is the producing of the sons of God, [the] many brothers of the Son of God. God desires to transform sinners in the flesh into sons of God in the spirit. If we would serve God in the gospel, we all should make this same matter our goal. We preach the gospel not simply that people may be saved or be forgiven of their sins or become spiritual, but that they may become sons of God. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 1832-1833)

Further Reading: The Advance of the Lord’s Recovery Today, ch. 1

« WEEK 3 — DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

John 4:23-24 But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

Phil. 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.

This word [concerning worship in John 4:24] was given to instruct the Samaritan woman regarding her need to exercise her spirit to contact God the Spirit. To contact God the Spirit with the spirit is to drink of the living water, and to drink of the living water is to render real worship to God. (John 4:24, footnote 3)

The worship of God should be in the place chosen by God to set His habitation there (Deut. 12:5, 11, 13-14, 18) and with the offerings (Lev. 1—6). The place chosen by God for His habitation typifies the human spirit, where God's habitation is today (Eph. 2:22). The offerings typify Christ. Christ is the fulfillment and reality of all the offerings with which God's people in the Old Testament worship Him. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 1835)

Truthfulness [in John 4:24] denotes the divine reality becoming man's genuineness and sincerity (which are the opposite of the hypocrisy of the immoral Samaritan worshipper—vv. 16-18) for the true worship of God. The divine reality is Christ (who is the reality—14:6) as the reality of all the offerings of the Old Testament for the worship of God (1:29; 3:14) and as the fountain of the living water, the life-giving Spirit (4:7-15), partaken of and drunk by His believers to be the reality within them, which eventually becomes their genuineness and sincerity in which they worship God with the worship that He seeks. (John 4:24, footnote 5)

Today's Reading

The believers not only serve God in their spirit but also serve Him by the Spirit of God [Phil. 3:3a]...“Serve” means to serve as priests. All New Testament believers are priests to God (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6)...As priests, we must serve God and worship Him in our spirit and by His Spirit.

In serving and worshipping God the believers should have no confidence in their flesh. Paul says that those who serve by the Spirit of God “have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3b).

Anything natural, whether it is good or evil, is the flesh....As believers in Christ we should not trust in anything we have by our natural birth, for everything of our natural birth is part of the flesh. In order to render genuine service and worship to God, everything we do must be by the Spirit of God, in Christ, and with no trust in the flesh.

Even though we have been regenerated, we may continue to live in our fallen nature, boast in what we do in the flesh, and have confidence in our natural qualifications....We need the Lord's light to shine on us concerning our nature, our deeds, and our confidence in the flesh. If we are enlightened by the Lord, we shall confess that although we have been regenerated to become children of God with the divine life and nature, we still live too much in the flesh. One day, when the light shines on you concerning this, you will want to prostrate yourself before the Lord and confess how unclean your nature is. Then you will condemn everything you do by your fallen nature. You will see that in the eyes of God whatever is done in the fallen nature is evil and worthy of condemnation....The time will come when instead of boasting in the flesh with its qualifications, we shall condemn it. Then we shall boast in Christ alone, realizing that in ourselves we have absolutely no ground for boasting.

Only when we have been enlightened by God shall we be able to say truly that we have no trust in our natural qualifications, ability, or intelligence. Only then shall we be able to testify that our confidence is wholly in the Lord. After we are enlightened in this way, we shall truly serve and worship God in our spirit and by the Spirit. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 1834, 1836-1838)

Further Reading: A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers, and Seekers of the Lord, ch. 2; Basic Lessons on Service, Isn. 16

<< WEEK 3 — DAY 5 >>

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 3:13-15 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him....But Jesus answered and said to him, Permit it for now, for it is fitting for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted Him.

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith...

When the people received John [the Baptist's] preaching and came to repent to him, he right away baptized them by putting them into the water to bury them, indicating that they were men of the flesh who had nothing good (Rom. 7:18) and were worthy only of death and burial. Perhaps some people thought that there should be a good result after their repenting to John. Instead, John put them into the water to bury them, indicating that they were good for nothing. (The God-man Living, p. 46)

Today's Reading

The base for Jesus to be baptized is that He considered Himself, according to His humanity, a man, especially an Israelite, who is a man "in the flesh" (John 1:14). Even though He was only "in the likeness of the flesh of sin" (Rom. 8:3), "without sin" (Heb. 4:15), yet He was "in the flesh," which has nothing good but is worthy only of death and burial. Christ as the Word of God became flesh and flesh is a negative term. Of course, Romans 8:3 tells us that He was only in the likeness of the flesh of sin, but He was still in the flesh. This was His standing in His humanity. John the Baptist came out to preach repentance to people in the flesh. Jesus admitted He was in the flesh. Whatever He had according to the flesh was only good for death and burial. He was standing on that ground, and that ground became His base for Him to be baptized.

Based upon this fact, at the beginning of His ministry for God, Jesus was willing to be baptized by John the Baptist, recognizing that, according to His humanity, He was one who did not have any qualification to be a servant of God. Jesus stood according to His real situation. His real situation was that He was a man of flesh.

As a man in the flesh, He needed to be a dead man buried in the death water to fulfill God's New Testament requirement according to His righteousness, and He did it willingly, considering it the fulfilling of God's righteousness. Such a base surely is proper and righteous.

Before the Lord Jesus began to do anything for His ministry, the first thing He did was to come to John to receive such a baptism to declare to the whole universe that He did not depend at all upon the flesh for God's ministry. We all have to see this. No one should bring anything of his natural life, anything of his flesh, into God's ministry. Especially the co-workers and elders need to realize that as a natural man in the flesh, we are good for nothing except death and burial. We need to have ourselves absolutely terminated in the water of baptism. This is the intrinsic significance of the base of Jesus' baptism. I hope also that all the full-time trainees, spiritually speaking, have accepted such a baptism. We all should declare in our life and work: "I am a person in the flesh, worthy of nothing in the eyes of God but death and burial; so I want to have myself terminated, crucified, and buried." (The God-man Living, pp. 50, 53)

You are a God-man. You have God living in you, making His home in you. You and He, He and you, are mingled together as one. You should not live a life by your natural life, your natural man. You and I, the old man, the natural man, have been terminated on the cross, crucified by the Lord in His death (Gal. 2:20a). We must leave our natural man on the cross. This is what it means to bear the cross. By leaving your old man on the cross, you will be conformed to the death of Christ (Phil. 3:10). (The Practical Points concerning Blending, pp. 26-27)

Further Reading: The God-man Living, msgs. 4-6; The Practical Points concerning Blending, chs. 2-4

« WEEK 3 – DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

The believers serve and worship God, and they work and labor for the Lord. In 1 Corinthians 16:10 Paul says of Timothy, “He is working the work of the Lord, even as I am.” In 15:58 Paul says to the Corinthians, “...Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...” The context of this verse is Paul’s dealing with the matter of resurrection (15:1-58).

“Not I but the grace of God” [in 1 Corinthians 15:10] equals “no longer I...but...Christ” in Galatians 2:20. The grace that motivates the apostle and operates in him is not some matter or thing but a living person, the resurrected Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God becoming the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, who dwells in him as his everything. By this grace Paul could be what he was and labor more abundantly than all the other apostles. Throughout the centuries, all the living servants of the Lord have had this resurrected Christ living in them. We can testify that He lives in us, enabling us to do what we could never do in ourselves.

In 1 Corinthians 15:58 Paul encourages us by saying that our “labor is not in vain in the Lord.”...Without resurrection, whatever we do is vain. But in resurrection our labor in the Lord is not vain. Therefore, resurrection is not only an encouragement; it also motivates us to the work of the Lord. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 1839-1841)

Today’s Reading

The principle to every service lies in the budding rod. God returned all the eleven rods to the leaders, but kept Aaron’s rod inside the Ark as an eternal memorial. This means that resurrection is an eternal principle in our service to God. A servant of the Lord is one who has died and resurrected. God testifies again and again to His people that authority to serve God lies in resurrection, not in a person himself. All services to the Lord must pass through death and resurrection before they will be acceptable to God. Resurrection means that everything is of God and not of us. It means that God alone is able and that we are not able. Resurrection means that everything is done by God, not by ourselves. All those who think highly of themselves and who hold a misguided judgment of themselves have never realized what resurrection is....If a man continues to think that he is able, that he can do something, and that he is useful, he does not know resurrection. He may know the doctrine of resurrection, the reason for resurrection, or the result of resurrection, but he does not know resurrection. All those who know resurrection have given up hope in themselves; they know that they cannot make it. As long as the natural strength remains, the power of resurrection has no ground for manifestation....What we can do belongs to the natural realm, and what is impossible for us to do belongs to the realm of resurrection.

Resurrection requires that we fall down, prostrate before God, and confess to Him, “I can do nothing. I am nothing, and I have nothing. This is what I am. If I can give anything to others, it is because You have given it to me. If I can do anything, it is because You have done it through me.” Once we prostrate before the Lord in this way, everything we have will become God’s work in us. Henceforth, we will never be mistaken....Everything that has to do with death belongs to us, and everything that has to do with life belongs to the Lord....A man must come to the end of himself before he will be convinced of his utter uselessness. After Sarah gave birth to Isaac, she would never be foolish enough to think that her own strength was responsible for it. The colt would not be mistaken to think that the hosannas were directed at it. (CWWN, vol. 47, “Authority and Submission,” pp. 248-250)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 169; CWWN, vol. 47, “Authority and Submission,” ch. 15

WEEK 3 — HYMN

An uplifted gospel have we Preaching of the Gospel — The High Gospel

1292

The musical score is written in 8/8 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. Chord symbols are placed above the notes. The lyrics are: 1. An up - lift - ed gos - pel have we, One we're not a-shamed to pro - claim. Our gos-pel's the high-est of all, For it is God's goal and God's aim. No long - er so low - ly and poor, We've found that we're God's ho - ly sons. No more will we preach as be - fore; Now each man on earth can be won.

2. Our Brother's inherited all
God made Him to rule His affairs
Appointed—this office He fills
And shares it with us, His joint-heirs.
Elected before earth was formed,
We've found that we are qualified
To share all His glory and worth.
How could men but for Christ decide?

3. Yes, we're holy brothers with Christ,
No higher could any man be.
This highest of all gospels is;
This gospel each human must see.
Partakers of this heavenly call,
Could any this gospel reject?
With Christ sitting far above all—
This highest of all gospels yet!