

Morning Nourishment

Rom. ...The gospel of God, which He promised beforehand 1:1-3 through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son...

15:16 That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

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, "When 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

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... The Christ in the four Gospels was among the disciples; the Christ in Romans is within us... 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. Our Christ is not merely the Christ in the flesh after incarnation and before resurrection, the Christ who was

among His disciples. Our Christ is deeper and more subjective. He is the Spirit of life within us. Although John 14 and 15 reveal that Christ will be in His disciples, that was not fulfilled before His resurrection... 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 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, 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. This is our aim... For Paul, the preaching of the gospel, the serving of God in the gospel of His Son, was a priestly ministry, a priestly service [15:16]. As believers, we all should serve God in such a priestly way in the gospel of His Son.

Whenever we contact anyone, whether a believer or an unbeliever, we need to know his need as far as the gospel is concerned. If a person is not clear about salvation, we should help him to be clear and even joyful in God's salvation. We need to serve him with the gospel. Others may be clear about salvation but not about other aspects of the gospel. Thus, we must minister something to meet their needs.

The crucial point in serving God in our spirit in the gospel of His Son is that we minister Christ to others in the gospel. For this, 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. This is to serve God in our spirit in the gospel of God's Son. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 1832-1834)

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

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____
