

Message Ten

Serving God in Our Spirit in the Gospel of His Son

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

- 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. Psalms 2:11-12:**
 - A. Paul said that the believers at 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.
- III. Paul said that he was “separated unto the gospel of God” (1:1), and he declared, “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 stressed 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.
 - 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.

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.

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 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.
- B. Based upon 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”—Gal. 2:20.

VII. Our work and labor for the Lord in the gospel is 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.