

Message Twelve

**A Laboring Priest of the Gospel of God
and
Serving God in the Gospel of His Son**

Scripture Reading: Rom. 1:9; 15:16, 29; 16:25-27

- I. “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”—Rom. 15:16:**
- A. Paul’s being a laboring priest of the gospel of God to minister Christ to the Gentiles was a priestly service to God, and the Gentiles whom he gained through his gospel preaching were an offering presented to God—1 Pet. 2:5:
 - 1. By this priestly service many Gentiles, who were unclean and defiled, were sanctified in the Holy Spirit and became such an offering, acceptable to God—Rom. 15:16; 16:4-5.
 - 2. These Gentiles were set apart from things common and were saturated with God’s nature and element, and were thus sanctified both positionally and dispositionally; such a sanctification is in the Holy Spirit—6:19; 15:16.
 - 3. Based on Christ’s redemption, the Holy Spirit renews, transforms, and separates unto holiness those who have been regenerated by believing into Christ—3:24; 12:2; John 3:15.
 - B. Paul is a pattern of the priesthood of the gospel; in the Epistle to the Romans, which concerns the gospel of God, he tells us how sinners can be saved and justified by believing in the Lord, how they advance in Christ by being sanctified and transformed, and how they present themselves to God as living sacrifices so that they may become members of the Body of Christ to live the church life, expressing Christ corporately and awaiting His coming—1 Thes. 2:1-12; Acts 20:17-36; Rom. 1:16-17; 3:24-26; 12:1, 4-5; 13:11.
 - C. The New Testament service ordained by God is that all believers are priests to serve God with the offerings that He desires—Rev. 1:5-6; 5:9-10; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9:
 - 1. As priests of the gospel of God, we offer saved sinners, as parts of the enlarged and corporate Christ, to God as sacrifices—Rom. 15:16.
 - 2. The offering of the believers to God is in three steps:
 - a. Those who preach the gospel offer the newly saved ones to God as spiritual sacrifices—v. 16; 1 Pet. 2:5.
 - b. After the new believers grow and begin to understand what it is to be a believer in Christ, they are encouraged to offer themselves to God as a living sacrifice—Rom. 12:1.
 - c. As the believers continue to grow unto maturity, those who labor on the believers present them full-grown in Christ—Col. 1:28.
 - D. In order to function as priests of the gospel, we need to see that the gospel of God includes the entire book of Romans; this Epistle shows us that when we preach the gospel, we make sinners the sons of God and members of the Body of Christ, and we help them to grow so that they can be active members in

the practice of the Body life in the local churches—1:16-17; 3:24; 5:10; 8:16; 12:2, 4-5.

- E. The service of the priesthood of the gospel is the service of the church as the Body of Christ; the focus of our service is to save sinners and offer them to God, and the goal of our service is the building up of the Body of Christ—15:16; 12:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Eph. 4:11-12, 16.

II. “God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son”—Rom. 1:9:

- A. The spirit in Romans 1:9 is not the Spirit of God but Paul’s regenerated spirit—John 3:6:
 - 1. Christ and the Spirit are with the believers in their regenerated human spirit—2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:16.
 - 2. In Romans Paul stresses that whatever we are, whatever we have, and whatever we do toward God must be in this spirit—2:29; 7:6; 8:4-6, 9, 13; 12:11.
 - 3. 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—Phil. 3:3.
 - 4. In order to serve in our spirit, we must sense the spirit, know the spirit, discern the spirit, and be burning in spirit—Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11; Heb. 4:12.
- B. The apostle Paul served God in the gospel as well as in his spirit; the way to serve God involves service in the spirit inwardly and service in the gospel outwardly—Rom. 1:9; 15:19-20; 7:6; 12:11.
- C. Our service to God in the gospel concerning His Son is related to the three sections of the gospel of God in Romans—redemption, life, and the Body:
 - 1. In the first section we should help the saints to know what redemption is, to know that the cross has dealt with every problem between us and God, and to know that in Christ we have been forgiven of our sins, justified by God, reconciled to God, and accepted by God—1:16-17; 3:24-26; 5:1, 9-11.
 - 2. In the second section we should help the saints to know that Christ as the life-giving Spirit is in us as our life, mingling Himself with our spirit as one spirit, and that now we may eat Him, drink Him, enjoy Him, be filled, saturated, and permeated with Him, and be saved in life and reign in life by being sanctified, renewed, transformed, and conformed to His image—vv. 10, 17; 6:19, 22; 8:9-11, 29; 12:2.
 - 3. In the third section we should help the saints to know the Body, to live in the Body, to coordinate together as members of the Body, and to realize that spirituality is a Body matter and that our spirituality must be measured by the Body and be tested by the Body—vv. 4-18.
- D. The Greek word rendered “serve” in Romans 1:9 means “serve in worship”; Paul considered his preaching of the gospel a service in which he worshipped God:
 - 1. The worship of God is our service to God, and this worship includes all positive matters between us and God, such as contacting God, praying to God, looking unto God, waiting on God, having fellowship with God, and working for God—Matt. 6:9, 33; John 4:23-24; Phil. 4:6, 20.

2. In the book of Revelation we see a special line—the line of worship—4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 9:20; 11:16; 13:4, 8; 14:7, 11; 15:4; 16:2; 19:4, 20; 20:4; 22:9:
 - a. God needs our worship, but Satan fears our worship of God, wants worship, and is seeking worship—Matt. 4:8-10; Rev. 4:10; 5:14; 13:4.
 - b. We should seek to give special worship to God, because Satan is getting worship for himself more and more—7:11; 13:4; 22:9.
 - c. If we live according to our spirit, God will gain our worship, but if we live according to the soul, Satan will gain our worship—Rom. 1:9; 8:4.
3. The worship that satisfies God the Father—worship in spirit and truthfulness—is the worship in the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity by our drinking and flowing the water of life in resurrection—the fountain, the spring, and the river—John 4:14, 23-24; 7:37-39; Exo. 17:6; Psa. 36:8-9; 1 Cor. 10:4:
 - a. The Samaritan woman worshipped God in her spirit by drinking of Him as the living water to quench her thirst; thus, God was worshipped by her in a genuine way—John 4:7-14, 23-24.
 - b. Throughout the centuries, only a small number of Christians have worshipped God in spirit by drinking of Him as the living water—cf. Matt. 15:9.
 - c. God in Christ as the Spirit comes to us as the living water for us to drink; when we drink of Him as the water of life, we worship Him in a genuine way—John 1:1, 14; 4:10, 14, 23-24; 7:37-39.
 - d. We urgently need to enter into the real worship of God in spirit by drinking Him as the living water—4:10, 14, 23-24.
4. Genuine worship is realized in the Body of Christ; worship in the New Testament is a corporate matter, and apart from the Body, it is difficult to have genuine worship—Rom. 1:9; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 10:3-4, 16-17; 12:12-13.
- E. The more we serve and worship God in our spirit in the gospel of His Son, the more we will enjoy the fullness of the blessing of Christ, and the more we will offer praise to God—Rom. 15:29; 16:25-27.
- F. “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery...to the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen”—vv. 25, 27.