

## The Weekly Word

Nov 7-13, 2016

Election Week... as you are reading the Bible, please be praying for the US elections this week. Happy reading...

Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

### **Monday, November 7: Romans 7- The wretch that I am...**

On so many levels I connect with this chapter. Particularly with the closing thought... *What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! (24-25a).*

I can and do play favorites. I think unkind thoughts about others, even strangers. I make unfounded judgments based on facial expressions, appearance, and speech patterns. I am generous with some and not others and I take pride at times in my generosity. Need I go on...

I look in the mirror and see someone who never did, would or could ever measure up to God's standard.

Paul's words fit my life. *What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?*

And like Paul I cry, *Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!* Without the grace and love of the Father, the sacrifice of Jesus the son and the work of the Holy Spirit opening me up to God's gospel I would be lost. I was lost.

But Christ found me... Why me? I will never know, at least this side of eternity. But He did and I am forever grateful.

Today I sit... marveling in my God, Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit. Three persons, one God, the miracle of the Trinity.

I marvel and praise the God who saves and who saved me. I continue to be imperfect, but I long to know God more and more, to grow more like Him in character, behavior and spirit.

*Praise be to You Lord God. Praise be to You. Amen.*

### **Tuesday, November 8: Romans 8- No words for God's goodness...**

I am virtually wordless as I conclude this chapter. The grand scope of God's work overwhelmed me... from no condemnation to the Spirit's presence in our lives to Sonship and on to nothing can separate us from the love of God. I am soaring with God and because of God alone.

There is not any hint of my goodness in this text, but the goodness of God to do all of this radiates from every paragraph. And I marvel at all God has given. I return to the progression of this chapter beginning with no condemnation and rifling on to the Spirit's presence in our lives and Sonship and on to nothing can separate us from the love of God.

The majesty of God, the goodness of God, the love of God...

I find myself sitting quietly... marveling

There are no words...

*O God, Father Jesus Spirit... praise be to You. Amen.*

### **Wednesday, November 9: Romans 9- Thanks to Jesus...**

*What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal (30-31).*

I can read these verses as if it were a theological statement (which it is) or I can hear them as a statement declaring how I benefited from God's grace (which I did).

Today in the quietness of personal time with the Lord I choose the latter. I choose to listen to these verses as they speak to me about the salvation and faith I have in thanks to Jesus Christ. I have my faith because of God's mercy (see verse 16). God looked down and chose to have mercy on me. I don't know why. I merited nothing but wrath because of my sin. But God doled out mercy...

I wonder why I am so blessed? I have no answer.

All I know is that I have this faith and it is my job to treasure, to hold on to it, and to do all I can to nurture and grow it. But even as I nurture it, I know that God's ongoing grace is a bigger component of my faith than I will ever know this side of eternity.

As Paul put it in verse 16: *It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.*

And as my devotion time winds down, I am moved back to a state of awe, appreciation and praise of God for everything He has done so that I might have faith...

*Lord God I continue in awe... You deserve all glory and honor and praise. May my lips never fail to sing Your praise... In Jesus name I pray. Amen.*

### **Thursday, November 10: Romans 10- Go and tell that others may declare and believe...**

*If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (9-15).*

Declare and Believe... and you will be saved. Acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus and follow the teachings of and about Jesus... and you will be saved. Such is the essence of the gospel message. This simple 'formula' is for everyone. No favorites, no special cases. It is the simple truth for everyone.

But for people to take advantage of the gospel message people have to tell others so that they can believe. And for this to happen people have to go to others to tell them...

One aspect of the miracle of the gospel is that God uses regular people like you and me. We need to go and tell others so they can declare and believe.

"Go and tell that others may declare and believe".

I don't know if the core of the Christian faith can be expressed more simply.

Question is, how are we doing in living out the core?

Four verbs pose the Spirit's inquiry to me this morning...

- Declare; Have I, have you, declared, acknowledged, told people that Jesus is Lord of your life
- Believe; Do you, do I, believe what the Bible teaches about Jesus?... that He died and was raised again, He is God's one and only Son, etc....
- Go; Have you walked across the room or the world to tell people about Jesus?
- Tell; Can you explain the gospel in simple terms that others might believe?

Such is the essence of the faith...

Think about it.

*Lord God, I have those aspects of the above that I am decent at and some parts not so good. Help me to grow my weak areas so that my overall effectiveness in sharing Your gospel will grow. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.*

### **Friday, November 11: Romans 11- To finish well...**

Oh the mysteries of God... that the disobedience and faithlessness of the Jews would lead to Gentiles (me) getting a shot at faith in God and salvation in Jesus!

God's ways are certainly beyond my ways. I do not comprehend in fullness God's plan. But what I do know is that through Jesus both Jews and Gentiles have access to faith, salvation and life in God's kingdom.

One piece that hit me in this chapter was not to get cocky in my new faith. *Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off (22).*

That word 'continue' always gets me. It reminds me to finish strong in my faith in Jesus. Finish strong, finish well... continue in Him!

I spend time at the gym 3-4 days a week, not because I have any delusion about some body-builder type body, but because God has given me one body. And I want to take care of it doing what I can to maintain health so my body functions the best it can particularly as I age. The same is true with my faith; I want to do what I can to maintain my faith so that my faith grows throughout my entire life, for as many years as God gives me this side of eternity.

So I read, study and meditate on the Word, pray, worship, and serve, pour into others and allow them to pour into me. I do this so that my faith stays strong for the long haul.

How about you? What are you doing to *continue in His kindness*?

Just asking, think about it...

*God give me joy in serving You and perseverance to continue in You even when the going is tough and tiring. I love You, Lord. I pray in Jesus name. Amen.*

### **Saturday, November 12: Romans 12- Continually...**

I feel excited as I open today and see that Romans 12 is today's reading. For me this is one of the great chapters of the entire Bible.

In view of everything God has done for you, live like this... (my paraphrase of how the chapter opens).

Now that I have anticipated the chapter, I will read it and see what verse the Lord signals for me to meditate upon today.

Reading this chapter produced greater delight than I anticipated. God's Word is deeper, richer, and more wonder-full than ever imagined.

It seems today God had me hover at the 10,000-foot level seeing larger themes rather than individual concerns.

In view of everything God has done for you, live like this...

- Continually grow by feeding your mind the things of God not human philosophies
- Don't be an arrogant I-am-better-than-others individual, be part of God's body and play your part, whatever that is, vibrantly.
- Love, do not hate; give the Lord room to have the final word.

What an incredible Word. Compact, straightforward, challenging...

My thoughts slip to how and what... how do I do this, what are the things I need to do today to fulfill this admonition?

Regarding the 'how'... bullet-point 1 seems to be the target, "continually to fill my life with God's voice". This is the only way I can counteract the constant bombardment of human philosophies that come to me in every imaginable way. I have to continually pump God's will, way and Word into my life.

Then the 'what' begins to become apparent... live as if other people matter as much or more than myself and use my abilities to make things better for everyone. And this is done by LOVE never hate.

Somehow the 'what do I do' of God comes down to LOVE... always LOVE

*Ok Lord, show me how and where I can love today... love those I naturally love and those I naturally don't. Love those I know and the stranger... LOVE.*

*Lord, I cannot do this on my own I need the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I pray in Jesus name. Amen.*

## **Sunday, November 13, 2016, Sunday Worship**

*If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.*

*If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at [office@pcogonline.org](mailto:office@pcogonline.org).*

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.