

Message Three

The Structure of the Gospel of God— the Righteousness of God, the Life of Christ, and the Faith of the Believers

Scripture Reading: Rom. 1:16-17; 3:22; 5:1-11; 10:17; Heb. 11:1; 12:1-2a

- I. The key word concerning the gospel of God in Romans and the banner of God's eternal economy is Romans 1:17, which reveals the structure of the gospel of God—"the righteous shall have life and live by faith."**
- II. The righteousness of God is the procedure of God's salvation judicially—vv. 16-17:**
 - A. God cannot forgive sinful people without meeting the demands of His righteousness (Psa. 103:6-7); according to His righteousness, "the soul who sins, he shall die" (Ezek. 18:4), and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23):
 1. Christ died a vicarious death as the Substitute for sinners, a death that was legal according to God's law and was recognized and approved by God according to the law—Isa. 53:5-6; 2 Cor. 5:21; Matt. 27:45-46.
 2. Christ, the righteous One, was judged on behalf of us, the unrighteous, by the righteous God according to His righteousness so that Christ might remove the barrier of our sins and bring us to God, making us the righteousness of God in Him—1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21.
 3. On the cross Jesus was made sin for us, condemned sin in the flesh, and by dying on our behalf fulfilled all of God's righteousness; now for the sake of His righteousness, God must forgive us—v. 21; Rom. 8:3, 10; John 19:30.
 - B. Because God is bound by His righteousness to forgive us, righteousness is the power of God's salvation and the unshakable foundation of our salvation—Rom. 1:16-17:
 1. Our experience of Christ rests on the foundation of God's righteousness, which is the solid, steadfast, and unshakable foundation of His throne (Psa. 89:14) and the base on which His kingdom is built (Rom. 14:17).
 2. God has put Christ to death on our behalf, He has recognized the death of Christ as the full payment of our debt of sins, and the resurrected and ascended Christ sitting at the right hand of God is the "receipt" of this payment—4:24-25.
 3. Thus, whenever we claim the blood of Jesus and appeal to God's righteousness, He has no choice except to forgive us—1 John 1:9; *Hymns*, #1003.
 - C. Life is the goal of God's salvation; thus, justification is "of life"; through justification we have come up to the standard of God's righteousness and correspond with it so that now He can impart His life into us—Rom. 5:18.
- III. The life of Christ is the purpose of God's salvation organically—v. 10:**
 - A. The result of our justification is the full enjoyment of God in Christ as our life; in God's organic salvation we have love, grace, peace, hope, life, glory, the Holy Spirit, Christ, and God as our enjoyment—vv. 1-11.
 - B. The saving life of Christ is accomplishing the organic goal of God's dynamic salvation in the following ways—v. 10:
 1. We have been justified by God in Christ as the righteousness from God to us so that we may live in this life before God—1:17.
 2. This life makes the God-justified believers the many sons of God (8:14; Heb. 2:10), who are the many brothers of Christ (Rom. 8:29) through regeneration (1 Pet. 1:3) by the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2) with God's producing and multiplying life.

3. This life is imparted into the dying believers so that they may grow in Christ out of death unto maturity—v. 11.
4. The indwelling Christ moves in the believers by the Spirit of life so that they may enjoy Christ's life with its peace—vv. 5-6.
5. This life sanctifies us with the holy nature of God as the holy element—6:19-20.
6. This life renews us by the Spirit of life, based upon the washing of regeneration, from the old element of our old man into the new constitution of our new man—12:2b; Titus 3:5.
7. This life transforms us metabolically by the Spirit of life with the element of Christ's divine life, from our old constitution to our new constitution, for the building up of Christ's organic Body—Rom. 12:2b, 5; 2 Cor. 3:18.
8. This life conforms us to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God so that we may be full-grown God-men for the Triune God's expression—Rom. 8:29.
9. This life glorifies us through the redemption of our body so that we may enter into the freedom of glory and our full sonship—vv. 21, 23, 30.
10. This life makes us reign as kings over Satan, sin, and death—5:17, 21.
11. All the above ten items are for the producing and building up of the organic Body of Christ expressed as the local churches; this is covered in the last five chapters of the book of Romans.

IV. The faith of the believers is the substantiation of God's salvation practically—Heb. 11:1:

- A. The faith of the believers is actually not their own faith but Christ entering into them to be their faith—Rom. 1:12; 3:22 and footnote 1; Gal. 2:16 and footnote 1.
- B. Our believing into Christ is our appreciation of Him as a reaction to His attraction—Rom. 10:17; Heb. 12:1-2a; cf. Acts 14:27.
- C. Faith comes out of the hearing of the word; when we come to the living Word (Christ) in the written word (the Bible), He becomes the applied word (the Spirit) of faith to us—Rom. 10:8, 17; Gal. 3:2; cf. Heb. 3:12.
- D. When man hears Christ, knows Him, appreciates Him, and treasures Him, He causes faith to be generated in man, becoming the faith in man that enables man to believe in Him—12:2a; Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:2, 5; 5:6.
- E. Faith is to believe that God is and we are not; He must be the only One, the unique One, in everything, and we must be nothing in everything—Heb. 11:1, 5-6.
- F. As believers, we live by faith and infuse Christ as faith into others by exercising our spirit of faith (2 Cor. 4:13; Rom. 10:14-17; Acts 26:22-29) so that they may be brought into the following organic relationships with Christ for His purpose:
 1. Christ is the cultivated olive tree and the vine, and we are His branches—Rom. 11:17, 24; John 15:1-8.
 2. Christ is the Head, and we are His members—1 Cor. 12:12, 27.
 3. Christ is the breath of life, the water of life, and the bread of life, and we are His breathers, drinkers, and eaters—John 20:22; 4:10, 14; 7:37-39a; 6:35, 51-63, 68.
 4. Christ is the Bridegroom, and we are His bride—3:29-30; 2 Cor. 11:2-3.
- G. Faith is the subjective God applied to our being; thus, just as nothing is impossible to God, nothing is impossible to faith—Matt. 17:20; 19:26.
- H. The great irrepressible and unlimited power of faith motivates thousands to suffer for the Lord, risk their lives, and become overcoming sent ones and martyrs to spread the gospel of God's eternal economy unto the uttermost part of the earth—Luke 18:8; Rom. 16:3-4; Acts 20:24; 1 Tim. 1:4, 11-12; Matt. 24:14; Acts 1:8.