

Outline Notes PAUL – LIVING AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD. April 17th 2010

Part 1 Paul's vision for what 'living as the people of God' means for every believer.

Part 2 Paul's vision of living as the people of God in Community – the Church.

Part 1 Paul's vision for what 'living as the people of God' means for every believer.

Quote

"In God's sight there are only two men – Adam and Jesus Christ and these two men have every other man hanging on their girdle strings." Thomas Goodwin a C17th divine.

En Christo – In Christ

Paul's favourite description of the Christian is 'en Christo'. It occurs 83 times in Paul's letters – usually in the form 'In Christ' or 'In Christ Jesus'. The phrase 'en kyrio' or 'in the Lord', or occasionally 'in the Lord Jesus' occurs a further 47 times. The same motif is found in other related phrases, 'with Christ', 'into Christ' and 'through Christ'. All these give Paul's view of different aspects of Christian identity and daily life.

God has only one gift to give to men and women and that is Christ but with him comes every spiritual blessing. See Ephesians 1 v 3.

Paul's uses the phrase 'In Christ' in a subjective and an objective way: -

1 He uses the phrase objectively to refer to the redemptive act that has happened 'in Christ', or to signify what Christ has yet to do.

Examples

Rom 3 v 24; 6 v 23; 8 v 2; 8 v 39;

1 Corinthians 15 v 22; 2 Corinthians 3 v 14 & 5 v 19;

Gal 3 v 14;

Phil 2 v 5 & 4 v 19;

1 Thessalonians 5 v 18;

2 He uses the phrase subjectively to speak of the believers experience of being "in Christ."

Rom 6 v 11; 8 v 1; 12 v 5; & 16 v 3.

1 Corinthians 1 v 2 & v 30; 15 v 18.

2 Cor 5 v 17;

Gal 1 v 22; & 3 v 28;

3 The phrases 'in Christ' and 'in the Lord' occur where Paul has in view his own activity or when exhorting his readers to think or do something.

Romans 9 v 1;

1 Corinthians 4 v 15; & 16 v 24;

Philippians 1 v 13;

2 Thessalonians 3 v 12; Philemon 20.

Paul's summarizes the source, identity and responsibilities of his life as a Christian in the phrases, 'in Christ' or 'in the Lord'. It was an integral part of his theology, his living and relationships. The motif describes his belief about Christ – 'who He is' and 'what He has done and will do' and opens a door to a living and vital experience of the risen Christ for every believer.

Paul lives with the tension of the 'now and not yet', between what is a present reality and still has to be realized in the future. So Col 1 v 27 'Christ in you the 'hope of glory'; and Col 3 v 4 "when Christ who is

our life,” speak of a full future realization while his prayer in Eph 3 v 17 “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith,” is a present reality.

The motif ‘in Christ’ carries an individual and a corporate application – the believer is brought into an experience of salvation by being ‘in Christ,’ but the church too was a community called it into existence and bonded together as one by their shared experience of Christ.

Romans 5 – 8 Paul’s Gospel of the New Life

Here Paul gives his clearest expression of the experience of salvation in daily living for believers.

Romans 5

In Romans chapter 5 verses 12ff Paul contrasts two men who are progenitors of two races - Adam & Jesus Christ. These two men through one act have either brought death to all men or the offer of life to all men. Through Adam’s disobedience death spread to the race that was at that moment in his loins. *“Death spread to all men because all men sinned.”* v 12. The whole of humanity was included in that act.

In contrast one man’s act of obedience can bring life to all men. We are destined for death not because we copied Adam’s sin but because we are all in Adam. The Good News is that we can receive life not by trying to copy Christ’s righteousness but by being baptized into Christ. The cross can bring you from death to life for ever because the one who died is now alive.

Romans 6

While Romans 5 speaks about ‘justification’ **“God, e’ say im alright.”**

In Romans 6 he speaks about our deliverance from the power of sin.

The Principle v 3 - 4.

We are baptized into his death so that we might share his resurrection and walk in newness of life. My union with Christ in his death and resurrection gives me a new relation to Satan and sin. Many Christians are ignorant of this. When you grasp that you died and rose with Christ you have found the principle of overcoming temptation and sin. Sin is alive still but you are not – you are free to say no.. You have been set free from slavery to your old Master the devil to fight against him. In your union with Christ in His death he has lost his power and rights over you and you are now alive to God.

The Practice v 11 - 14

Having laid down the principle Paul goes on to show us how apply this in practice.

i) By doing something with your mind – ‘reckon’ v 11

Reckon is an accountancy word - you reckon facts and do the sums.

Watchman Nee wrote, *“Think of the bewilderment of trying to get into a room that you are already in. If we realize the fact that we are in, we make no effort to enter. If we had more awareness of being dead to sin we should have fewer prayers and more praises. Much of our praying for ourselves is just because we are blind to what God has done for us.”*

We are either ignorant or suffering from memory loss. We need to know and put the principles into practice by standing in our new identity.

ii) By doing something with your body – yielded your members as instruments of righteousness v 12 - 14

Paul envisages the parts of the human body as implements to be used in the service of our New Master. Our limbs, mind, imagination, emotions, will and hands, feet and sexual organs are to

be placed into the hands of Christ. What we offer to God will become part of who we are and part of the new world God is bringing into being.

Romans chapter 7

Is the struggle Paul presents in ch 7 common to both Christians and non-Christians?

The answer is both! Paul is not describing a split mind i.e. a schizophrenic condition with half of my mind wanting to do good and half wanting to do bad. Paul's mind is not divided. The condition he describes is more akin to having a movement disorder. You want to do something with your mind but however much you will it in your head you can't control the movement of your limbs. In a similar way it is no good telling a person to live a godly life. His mind might agree with that but his members can't do it. That is why the law can't save you.

Paul seems to be speaking of both his pre and post conversion experiences. In verses 7-13, all the verbs are in the past while in verses 14 -25 they are in the present. Before he was converted he gave into sin whereas now as a Christian he struggles against sin.

Paul's explanation goes like this – when I believed in Jesus my old self was crucified with him but something didn't die – the body I live in. I have a new inside but an old outside and there is a conflict between them. My body goes on doing what it did before my conversion. I have a new heart and mind and new desires but I have problems with my old habits and members. The inner person has eternal life but the outer body is decaying. God has started the work of redemption from the inside and is working outwards. There is a tension between the part of me that has been saved my mind and the part that hasn't my flesh.

The struggle does not mean that I am not a Christian but there is something I still need to learn. Romans 7 v 25 tells you how you got into this struggle and Romans 8 tells you how to get through the struggle.

In Romans 7 v 22-25, articulates the struggle but gives a clue as to the way out. The answer to getting in the struggle is in the words, ***"I of myself."*** Whenever you try to keep the law by yourself you will land up in this struggle. You can't keep the law of God by effort or will power. If you try to please God by yourself then whether you are a Christian or not you finish up in this struggle.

Romans 8

What you need is a new dynamic within – the Spirit. The keyword of Romans 7 'I' occurring 27 times is replaced by 'the Spirit' occurring 12 times in 8 v 1-17. The Spirit is the dynamic that can bring my members under control.

You can sum up the message of Romans 8 in the following slogan. "Out of slavery (v 1-13) into son ship or daughter hood, (v 14-17) through suffering (v 18-26)to Glory." (v 28-39)

Out of Slavery

The secret of freedom from the condemnation for sin verse 1 and the compulsion to sin verse 2 comes through being **"In Christ."** It is like the difference between being subject to the laws of gravity and aerodynamics. A bird can rise above the law of gravity only by being subject to a higher law, the law of aerodynamics – the law of the Spirit of life. Verse 11.

into Son-ship & Daughter-hood

The first time in Romans we meet the description of the Christian as a son or daughter of God. The Holy Spirit is the perfect witness to our adoption verse 15.

through suffering The pivotal thought is in v 18. Paul weighs our suffering which in the light of eternity will be brief with the weight of glory that will be ours.

Creation suffers verses 18-22

Christians suffer verses 23-25

The Spirit Suffers verses 26-27

Paul speaks of the Spirit being present at the snapping points of life, where we fail and words fail or when we feel numb and incoherent. The Spirit is **for us then an intercessor** - one who stands in our shoes. He takes our groanings and turns them into prayer. The father doesn't listen to the words but looks at the heart. Paul may be thinking of the gift of tongues here, or the groans and sighs of a Christian who has caught a glimpse of what s/he is going to be, and yet how far s/he is from that now.

to Glory verses 28 -39.

We can be confident of Glory because of God's Sovereignty

These verses form a ring of assurance because "all things work together for good for those who love God."

God can make us more than conquerors v 37 so that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. To conquer means to defeat or kill but to more than conquer means to use a difficult experience for our good. Paul has discovered that God has used them to bring him closer to the one who is nearest and dearest to him.

Part 2 Outline Notes - Paul – Living as the people of God: The Church – The Body of Christ

Faith for Paul is first hand and therefore personal but a faith relationship with Christ is necessarily a corporate experience also.

Paul uses different terms to describe the People of God.

1 The Church of God – ecclesia.

Church is the most frequent term used by Paul to refer to the groups who met in the name of Christ. (The word occurs 62 times in the Pauline corpus – most frequently in 1 Corinthians, 23 times in Acts, and 20 in Revelation.)

Paul's uses a term drawn directly from Israel's identity as 'the assembly of Yahweh.' He intended to depict the little assemblies of Christian believers as equally manifestations of and in direct continuity with 'Israel.' Paul realized that in persecuting Jesus he was persecuting the church. This recognition was foundational to his whole ecclesiology for it implied the special status of the Jerusalem church and its continuity with Israel.

Paul uses the term 'assembly of God' in an inclusive sense - to include Gentile as well as Jew. He has no problem with conceiving 'the assembly of God' as manifested in many different places at the same time – the churches of God in Judea, Galatia, Asia or Macedonia. When believers met for worship or fellowship they were in direct continuity with the assembly of Israel. Paul's typically has in mind the church in a particular place or region. His primary thought was of a local assembly as 'the church of God' in the city where it met.

He could speak of the whole congregation in a place as church, but also of individual house groups within that congregation as church – "*he baptized the household of Stephanus*" 1 Cor 1 v 16. Wherever believers met they were the church of God. In 1 Cor 16 v 19, Paul can send the greetings of the church in Asia together with the church that meets in the house of Prisca and Aquila. Regular meeting in homes were interspersed with less frequent gatherings of the whole church.

The focus of 'church' is given by its character as 'assembly'. Paul speaks of believers coming together to be church. It was only as a gathering for worship and fellowship that they could function as 'the assembly of God.'

Paul takes Jewish cultic language out of its context of a sacred place – temple or a sacred person – priest and uses it of ordinary individuals in their daily lives and service.

See Romans 12 v 1-2. He does away with the divide between the sacred and secular. He describes believers as God's temple 1 Cor 3 v 16-17; and their bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit 2 Cor 6 v 16.

Though Paul uses the language of priesthood but widens its meaning. Though Paul uses the language of priesthood he saw all ministry and service on behalf of the gospel as priestly ministry. He was comfortable with the notion that every one in the church is a minister.

Paul also cut through the cultic categories of clean and unclean. In the light of Christ he saw that 'nothing is unclean in itself; everything is clean' Romans 14 v 14, 20. Paul extends the purity symbolized by the temple throughout the whole people of God but he calls for a purity which penetrated to the heart and thus made further purity rules unnecessary or redundant.

2 The Body of Christ.

This is one of Paul's favourite metaphors to describe the church.

The Body of Christ is God's creation. It is what John Stott refers to as **"a supernaturally constituted body."** We enter the body by God's doing, 1 Corinthians 12 v 12-13;

Baptism in the Spirit.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the act of the Holy Spirit joining together in a spiritual unity people of diverse races and social backgrounds so that they form the body of Christ. The Pentecost event was really the birth of the church. Before it, the disciples were a church in embryo. The church is not simply a human fellowship; it is a creation of God by the Holy Spirit. There is one church into which all the converts, whether Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles or followers of John are baptized by the same Spirit. What convinced the disciples that non Jewish converts could be baptized was that they shared the same experience of the Spirit as they had received at Pentecost. The church then is universal and created by an act of God.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a once and for all event by which the Spirit constitutes individual believers as members of the Body of Christ.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is primarily an individual experience that can be repeated, and has to do with faith and obedience Acts 5 v 32; 4 v 8; 13 v 9; and Ephesians 5 v 18.

Paul's use of the metaphor of the Body of Christ.

Rom 12 v 4 & 5. The body is specifically defined by its relation to Christ.

He uses it in 1 Cor 10 v 14-17 when faced with misunderstanding about the Lord's Supper and in 1 Cor 12 v 12 ff when faced with questions about worship. He uses the image in a flexible way.

Why this term and where did Paul get it from?

The most plausible source of the imagery is from the secular world. The image of the city or state as a body was familiar in the world of politics. The unity of the state depended on the mutual interdependence of its diverse members being fully recognized. Paul adapts a familiar and widely used secular metaphor. The church is a body like the secular body politic, but it is different because its identifying feature is that it is 'the body of Christ.' The identity of the Christian assembly as the body is given by their common allegiance to Christ.

Paul speaks of the interdependence of the different members of the body and concludes, *"You are the body of Christ and individually members of it."*

3 Jesus is the Head of the Body.

Ephesians 1 v 20ff

Paul's prayer for the church is that they will see that the power that raised Jesus from the dead is now available to them. Paul's prayer is that God will give us a spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Jesus. Then we will see a lot more of the power that is available. With a fresh gift of wisdom we will see things about the Kingdom that people don't normally see.

In Ephesians 2 v 10 Paul makes a powerful statement of the reason for the Church's existence. The church is to teach the rulers and authorities God's wisdom by being a community in which men, women and children of every race, social and cultural background come together in glad worship of the one true God.

Example – the breaking of apartheid in South Africa.

Colossians 2 v 18 *“He is the head of the body, the church.”*

The body gets its life from the head, through what it thinks, sees, smells, hears, eats and drinks. In the same way the church is nourished and sustained in all its joints, muscles and ligaments, not by embracing this or that new teaching, but by holding fast to the head. If Jesus is the head of the body the church will only function when it is open to receiving direction from Jesus. He models this for us in John 5 v 19, *“I only do what I see the Father doing.”*

Spiritual Gifts: - Characteristics

i) The Gifts of the Spirit are characterized by **Diversity**.

A charism is a divine grace that finds expression in word or deed.

Gifts of **speech** include – prophecy, teaching, encouraging Romans 12 v 6-7; the utterance of wisdom and knowledge, prophecy and tongues and interpretation 1 Cor 12 v 8-10.

Gifts of **action** include service, sharing, caring or leading, doing acts of mercy Rom 12 v 6-7, gifts of healing and miracles 1 Cor 12 v 9-10, 28-30, helpful deeds and giving guidance 1 Cor 12 v 28.

- ii) The gifts have the character of **mutual interdependence**. 1 Cor 12 v 8-10, e.g. tongues and interpretation, or prophecy and discernment of spirits.
- iii) There is flexibility about the gifts and there is no suggestion that the list of gifts in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 is complete. The list in 1 Cor 12 seems to have been determined by the particular experiences and fascinations of the Corinthian Christians which was hardly a model for Christian community.
- iv) The gifts express a certain character - love.
They are given by **inspiration** Rom 12 v 6, and their purpose is to bring integration 1 Cor 12 v 7. The test of a charism is its worth to the community.
The description of the assembly functioning in 14 v 26-32; suggests a mixture of what is prepared and what is spontaneous.
The gifts are an embodiment of the divine grace that is seen on the Cross – this means they need to be free from any selfish sub plots and always directed in love for the benefit of others. Spiritual Gifts enable every member ministry. A church operating with natural gifts will have a few gifted and confident people doing everything. But when God activates and distributes spiritual gifts everybody is given something to contribute to the whole for the common good. There is no hierarchy of gifts and no one should regard their gifts as of less value than others or their own as dispensable. 12 v 21.

5 Living with others in Community.

a) **Ephesians 4** – We are invited to unwrap a God given gift and work with it, verse 3 'the unity of the Spirit. He then describes the different gifts that God had given to the church as the means of equipping the saints for ministry and building up the Body of Christ so that we all attain the unity of the faith verse 13

b) **Philippians 2 – Achieving Unity in the Body.**

There is a squabble in the church in Philippi which is fracturing the church's unity. In chapter 2 Paul urges the church to be of the same mind. The chapter begins by stating three things that God continually gives to his church – Christ's encouragement, God's love and the fellowship of the Spirit. There is no problem at the source with these three. The one human quality we are called to add is compassion or sympathy.

Paul explores the mind of Christ and the route he took to achieve reconciliation and unity. The secret of harmony and humility is in the mind - it depends on how you think. So Paul explores the mind of Christ to provide us with a pattern for our living. ***“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus”*** v 5. He dares to say that we have the mind of Christ but challenges us to allow His mind to replace ours, with all our old ways of thinking and acting. He calls us to become what we are in Christ!

Christ emptied himself and chose to take steps downwards. He let go of position and privilege and was born in the form of a servant (at the bottom of the social ladder). He stepped down also in the manner of his death. Paul’s insight into Christ’s mind is that He chose to live the lowest life and to die the lowest death. But this is the mind that creates reconciliation and unity. These verses are intended as a basis of behaviour not just belief. Paul is telling us how to live and behave in the Christian community.

When are secure in our relationship with God, we can choose to lay aside position and privilege and choose the way of a servant which makes for unity. Reconciliation with someone we have fallen out with will always begin with a step of descent – an admission that we have contributed to the fallout and we can choose to take the first step in putting things right by repentance and faith. It will involve faith in receiving afresh the encouragement of Christ to put things right; the love of God that forgives our pride and defensiveness; and the fellowship of the Spirit who nudges us in the direction of repentance and reconciliation. Then we have to add the human qualities of compassion and sympathy. Can we see that as long as we hold on to unforgiveness we are really asking God to choose between us? God in fact says, *“I love you both, I cannot choose between you... I have died for you both!”* When we are willing to step down God will lift both of us up together.

Jesus models for us the way that creates and sustains unity.

David Hughes, April 2010

<http://marpleparish.co.uk/Resources/theology2.htm>