

**The Weekly Word**  
Feb 24 – March 2, 2014

March is here. The days are getting longer. Spring is nearing and God's Word is ever fresh and new. Happy reading...  
Grace and Peace, Bill

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

**Monday, February 24: Ruth 2– Faithful eyes see God at work...**

A number of observations trickled through my thoughts. A good worker eventually gets noticed (7) was one thought. But what captivated my heart was God working in the shadows.

The Lord says He will never leave us or forsake us, but that doesn't always mean we are aware of His presence in every moment.

Ruth set out to find food and to glean behind field workers. She could have ended up in any field. Instead, by the providence of God, she ends up working in the field of a close relative, who happens down to the field that day and notices her. He even takes a liking to her. When Ruth comes home with a full day's amount of grain and tells Naomi about her day, Naomi sees God's hand at work and exclaims, "*The LORD bless him! He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead. That man is our close relative; he is one of our kinsman-redeemers*" (20).

Yesterday Naomi saw God's hand in the harsh realities of life. Today she sees the Lord's kindness in the affairs of Ruth's day.

Two thoughts emerge. 1) God is alive and well and often working in the background of life orchestrating His will. 2) The faith-filled person will see God's hand at work and honor Him for what He does.

I spent some time replaying the events of my recent days, thanking the Lord for His providential care and love. I particularly paused at a few incidents in which my 'faith-eyes' saw God at work for His Will and with His Mercy.

Praise danced in my heart...

*Praise to the Lord the Almighty the king of creation. O my soul sings for his help and salvation! All you who hear, now to his temple draw near and join me in glad adoration.*

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above you heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.*

*Amen.*

**Tuesday, February 25: Ruth 3– Providential Care...**

I don't understand some of the customs, like sleeping at the man's feet. But even not knowing some of the customs; it is clear that, again, God is at work. Ruth is certainly inviting Boaz to redeem her and Naomi offering herself in marriage. She does so discreetly, allowing Boaz an out should he not want to take it.

Tact and discretion are tremendous gifts to have and skills to hone. Some people just know how to raise an issue so that it gets a favorable hearing. Naomi and Ruth both appear to be endowed with tact.

Certainly, however, God is at work. The fact that Ruth happened into Boaz's field and now is disposed to redeem Ruth, which would include continuing Naomi's lineage, shows God is at work.

As I consider this chapter, I see the synergistic work of God and people. God was at work, but Ruth needed to fulfill her role faithfully as well, which she did with tact and grace.

I am reminded that my faithfulness is integral to God's work in my life. God can always act sovereignly and by fiat as He wishes, but God generally chooses to work with us. And my part is to be faithful and to follow God's lead.

This is why it is so important for us to remain open to the Lord, following His guidance and listening for His voice.

*Lord, may I be open to You as I live my day today. Help me to listen and respond faithfully to You throughout the day and every day. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Wednesday, February 26: Ruth 4– God's great design...**

And so the story ends, Boaz marries Ruth and they have a son, Obed, who is the father of Jesse and the grandfather David, the great king of Israel.

Only now do we realize that there was much more going on than God simply coming to the aid of Naomi and Ruth. Yes, the Lord was helping and blessing Naomi and Ruth., But possibly, more importantly, God was orchestrating His salvation plan.

The Lord God will bring His Will and His Salvation to fruition. In fact God is working right now to complete His Will of taking His Name to the nations. As believers, we are somehow woven into God's Will. We have a part in God's Salvation and our faithfulness, day by day, is important.

As I sit here, I'm sensing that the Lord wants me to be more mindful of His workings to bring about His Will. Oh, I may not know specifically what the Lord is up to, but God is asking me to be open and be alert to His affairs and His Will. To listen, seek and pray for His glorious will to make disciples of people from every tribe and nation and tongue.

*Lord, what do You want me to do to help bring Your Will about? Lord, what role do you desire me to play? I am Yours, Oh, Lord. Whatever You ask, I am Yours. Amen.*

### **Thursday, February 27: Galatians 1– Importance of the gospel...**

How important is the Gospel and its defense to Paul? Immensely important!

I was struck by the veracity of Paul's defense. *Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! (7b-9).*

We will have to allow the letter to unfold to hear the Gospel Paul preached. But for now, I was struck by Paul's 'no holds bared' defense. Twice he says that those who pervert the Gospel should be *eternally condemned!* There is no fate worse than this. This is the strongest language possible.

Those who pervert the Gospel deserve a seat alongside the devil and his henchmen in hell for all eternity. This is what Paul writes. And if we overlay the understanding that all scripture is inspired by God, then this is what God has destined for people who pervert the Gospel!

Is the Gospel important? Absolutely!

The voice of the Spirit follows, “Since the Gospel is so important you should make sure you know what the Gospel is.”

Yes, I thought. I need to know the Gospel for my own salvation. I need to know the Gospel so that I can tell when someone is preaching a false gospel, *which is really no gospel at all* (7a). And I should know the Gospel so that when called upon, I can share it correctly myself.

As I read the remainder of Galatians, my eyes are set on descriptions of the Gospel.

*Lord, thank You for the Gospel, it is the hope of salvation for all who believe. It is my hope, and it is my calling along with all in Your church to share that hope with the world until there are believers from every tribe and language and nation. To Your glory, I pray and labor. Amen.*

### **Friday, February 28: Galatians 2– The gospel begins to unfold...**

As Paul tells his story, elements of the Gospel message begin to be revealed. Verse 16 is a foundational start. *[We Jews] know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.*

The Gospel isn't following rules, the Old Testament law or any other human made set of rules and regulations. We cannot work or earn our way to God. A rule based 'gospel' would be just that, a way to earn our way to God.

The Gospel is not about bloodline or lineage or being born a Jew or some other 'preferred' race.

**The Gospel is God's message that faith in Jesus Christ alone, not following some set of rules or being from some particular bloodline, justifies a person.**

And so back to Paul's narrative. Titus didn't feel compelled to be circumcised (3). Why? Because following the OT Law is not the Gospel. And Paul opposed Peter openly (11-13) because following the dietary laws of the OT is not the Gospel.

**The Gospel is God's message that faith in Jesus Christ alone justifies a person.**

Praise God for the Gospel. Faith in Jesus Christ, not any human set of works, justifies a person!

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above you heavenly host. Praise Father, son and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

*Praise God for the Gospel... Lord teach Your Gospel to me. Amen.*

### **Saturday, March 1: Galatians 3– The Gospel comes through faith in Christ...**

Paul hammers the faith (believing) aspect of the Gospel home in this chapter. He hammers it not once, or twice but continually throughout chapter 3.

- *I would like to learn just one thing from you: **Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?** Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Have you suffered so much for nothing--if it really was for nothing? **Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?** (2-5)*
- *Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. ... **So those who have faith are blessed** along with Abraham, the man of faith. (6-7,9)*

- *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. (13-14)*
- *But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. ... So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. (22,24-25)*
- *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (26-28)*

Reading back over these key verses, which amount to virtually the entire chapter, it seems like Paul uses a rapid-fire pneumatic nailer to secure his premise that the Gospel comes by faith in Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is gift, not a human effort or work; it is by faith in Jesus! And it is for everybody, Jew & Gentile, slave & free, male & female.

So if you have faith in Jesus, thank God for His gift and the Gospel. If you do not feel as if you have faith in Jesus Christ, why don't you reach out to Him and grab hold of the gift of faith God is holding out to you right now.

*Thank You, Lord, God, for the Gospel, for the message that a person can be restored into connection and relationship with You, Lord, God by simple and honest faith in Jesus Christ.*

*Alleluia. Amen.*

## **Sunday, March 2, 2014, 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.