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The Establishing of the Kingdom of God's Anointed, Part 8

Receiving from Christ much more than a Healing

In Mark 5 we read of the incredible story of a woman who was suffering with a physical ailment for twelve years. No doctor in the land could help her; in fact all that they had done was to make her worse.¹ As far as the best minds of her day were concerned, she was doomed to suffer for the rest of her life.

But then she heard of Christ and the amazing things He had done, and she knew what she had to do. She didn't need to talk to Him. No! He was far too busy. And besides with talk came the possibility of rejection. What she needed to do was simply to touch Him; that's how powerful she knew Him to be.

And so the day came when Christ was preaching in the environs close to her home. She approached Him along with the thousands who had come out to see Him. She worked her way through the crowd; it must have been hard in her condition and at her age. Yet whether it was on account of the strength of hope or her own determination, she managed to get at arms-length to the Lord. Then privately and stealthily, she touched Him. At that moment she was healed! How wonderful!

But then Christ stopped and said, "Who touched My garments?" (Mark. 5:30)

¹ Compare Mark 5:23

Mark 5:31-33, “And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.”

And that’s when it occurred! Not only did Christ validate her healing, but... get this... He opened her eyes and brought her into His Kingdom.

Mark 5:34, “And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.”

Christ literally says that faith had saved her. And if there was any doubt that this wasn’t a genuine conversion, notice the additional exhortation, “go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.” It doesn’t make sense that Christ said, “Daughter your faith has healed... now go and be healed.” No. The first “healing” referenced by Christ here had to be her salvation.

Isn’t that glorious! She came to Christ for physical healing, but walked away as a child of God! What an incredible example.

Ephesians 3:20, “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”

How many come to Jesus with mixed motives; only wanting to be saved from hell, but then discovering that in Christ they have received so much more?

How many, like this woman, become a Christian with little more hope than temporal help; but then walk away with eternal riches?

Such is the “flavor” of Christianity! Such is the benefit which flows from the kingdom of God’s anointed! 1 Samuel 11 allows us to behold the benefit or fruit which accompanied Saul’s kingdom. And yet as Saul’s Kingdom was but a shadow or foretaste of Christ’s and thus we understand this is a picture of what the child of God enjoys as citizens of Christ’s kingdom.

Thus far we have seen that accompanying Saul’s and Christ’s Kingdom was/is the fruit of

- Forgiveness, 1 Samuel 11:12-13.
- Coronation, 1 Samuel 11:14-15a.

Biblical Fellowship

As we continue looking at the fruit of the kingdom, let us consider the final fruit; the fruit of fellowship. The first element of fellowship is fellowship with God.

1 Samuel 11:15, “**And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD;** and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.”

We are confronted with the Peace Offering once again. This is the most wonderful of all sacrifices

prescribed by God in His worship.

What is the significance of the “peace offering”?

To answer this question one needs to be somewhat familiar with the worship which God instituted in the Old Testament. Heretofore we have seen that in the Old Testament worship of God there were three types of prescribed offerings.

- Sin offerings (of which there were two) each of which emphasized the forgiveness of sin. When the offering was given the worshipper laid his hands on the head of a spotless lamb and then confessed his sins. This symbolically placed them on the lamb. Then the worshipper slit the lamb's throat and the priest sprinkled the blood on the altar. It is important to note that with this sacrifice the priest took a portion of the offering for his support.
- Burnt offerings (of which there were three); each of which emphasized primarily dedication. Here the offering was given as in the sin offering, BUT instead of the priest taking a portion for himself, the ENTIRE animal was consumed on the altar. The implication was that the worshipper thereby was offering himself to God- wholly and unreservedly. This actually is the role of the word of God in the life of the child of God. Using the imagery of the burnt offering we read this:

Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Truly when the child of God submits to the word, the result is the flaying of the worshipper before the Lord in which the soul is pierced by the word, and His intentions, motivations, actions, and deeds are seen for what they really are. As painful as this may be, the end is the refashioning of the worshipper into the image of Christ. This is the imagery of the Burnt Offering.

- Peace offerings (of which there were six); this sacrifice laid stress on fellowship. With this sacrifice, a lamb was offered as in the sin and burnt offerings, but the remains were given back to the worshipper to bring home!! Here the local priest was invited to a fellowship meal at which the worshipper, his family, others in the community, and the priest ate and so enjoyed table fellowship. The meal signified that peace between God and those at the meal had been restored! Fellowship had been renewed! Once again the worshipper could be assured that the Lord walked with him.

Now in light of this let me ask you a very important question: What was the end result of the establishing of the kingdom of God’s Anointed?

The end result was the offering up of a Peace Offering, and so it was nothing less than fellowship with God! And thus, the result of the establishing of Saul’s kingdom was

- Deep and abiding fellowship with God.
- Depth in one’s walk.
- An intimacy of communion.
- An ever growing love for the Lord.
- FELLOWSHIP!

And get this not only is this the end of Christ's Kingdom, BUT this constitutes part of the end (telos) for which we have been made! When God created the world, He did so with two clear objectives in mind:

- The manifesting of His glory (cf. Isaiah 43:6b-7; Revelation 4:11).
- The creation of a relationship with man (Genesis 3:8).

When God created man, He gave man a special endowment. He created man in the image of God and endowed with the capacity to love, communicate, share, sacrifice, give, etc.²

He blessed man with a special privilege: in the garden we read of God walking with man in the cool of the day.³ This speaks first and foremost of a relationship, of a fellowship, of a communion in which man delights in God and God delights in man.

This is why you and I were created! The Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it this way: "What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever" (WSC #1). And so is it any surprise to read here that the shadow of Christ's kingdom — the Kingdom of Saul — resulted in deep and abiding fellowship with God.

Is it any shocker that this also comprises part of the rationale for the establishing of Christ's Kingdom? What by definition is the end of eternal life? Why did God save you?

John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know⁴ thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Recall that the word *know* in this passage references the deepest of all relationships. God redeemed us that we might fellowship with Him, walk with Him, commune with Him. This is how we will live out eternity!

In 1 John 1, the apostle John tells us why he shared the gospel:

1 John 1:3, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Do you understand that?

The essence of Christianity is a love-relationship with the Father and the Son. When one becomes a Christian he is brought into communion with God by which we enjoy a perpetual peace offering.

In Luke 10:39 we read of Mary being seated at Christ's feet. Don't think that this is just a prerogative that Mary had. This is a privilege that you and I have at all times. Remember Christ's words in the Great Commission after charging the Apostles to "make disciples of all nations" He said, "...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

² Compare Genesis 1:27-30

³ Compare Genesis 3:8

⁴ γινώσκω ginosko

When we entered the Kingdom of God, we were ushered into a relationship with Christ by which He ever and always walks with us for the purpose of communion! That is why God created you AND that is why He redeemed you!

Yes God created you that your life might bring glory to Him; yet that is but half of it. God ALSO created and saved you that you might spend eternity communing, enjoying, loving, and abiding in Christ. Oh brothers and sisters, when I consider this truth and then think of my life, I conclude that

- Our world is too small.
- Our expectations are too low.
- We are far too easily satisfied.

For most of us, we live our lives thinking that God's plan for us in Christ is our

- Purity.
- Obedience.
- Service.

And when we fall short of these virtues we feel like failures believing that God is displeased with us!

Now don't misunderstand what I am saying here. I certainly do not want to down-play these callings because they are important in the life of the child of God. Paul tells us that Christ saved us so that we might be "zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:13). However we must see that this is not what we were created for.

Micah 6:8, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

These are the results of having participated in our greatest end.

The tax collectors and sinners of Christ's day did not have to clean up their lives in order to gain the right to enter into fellowship with Christ. No. Christ entered into fellowship with them and that resulted in their cleaned-up life. Christ told a sinner just saved by grace these words:

John 5:14, "Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole [a wellness that included salvation]: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

This truth will revolutionize our thinking. And it is revolutionary when it comes to our walks; for it impacts our understanding of God's disposition toward us and so our fellowship. Far from a distant, far off, angry God looking for the slightest imperfection that He might "get you..." God's disposition toward us right now is one of a bride-groom endeavoring to fellowship and so commune with His bride.

Isaiah 62:5, "For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."

Do you understand?

This is God's disposition toward the child of God. It is on account of this that God prescribed the peace

offering!

Zephaniah 3:17, “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.”

God doesn't love us and say, “Except for this and that you are ok.” His love for the child of God is without qualification! He rejoices over you with shouts of joy. And such is the relationship into which we have entered on account of the advent of the kingdom of God in our lives! We are the living out of a perpetual peace offering. We have the privilege of walking with God, communing with Him, and enjoying Him forever!

Fellowship with Man

Yet that is one half of the story. Notice, the final result of the establishing of the kingdom of God's anointed in the life of the child of God is fellowship with man.

1 Samuel 11:15, “And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; **and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.**”

At this point it is unthinkable that the people, having participated in this peace meal with God, took their part of the sacrificial lamb and then went to their own separate corners like animals and ate. No! The precedent for such a meal was set in Saul's life when first he was presented to the elders of Israel as the king of Israel.

1 Samuel 9:22, “And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons.”

Here we behold one of the few descriptions of an actual peace-meal. During a peace meal a group of people gathered into a house and reclined at a table. Here they ate together with God.

Now was it formal? Was it stuffy and forced?

John 13:23-25, “Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?”

This passage contains the description of another peace meal; this time it was that of the Passover meal. Christ had just prophesied about His betrayal. And notice that (forgetting the issue of Christ's betrayal) the level of fellowship that was enjoyed during a peace meal was very intimate. It was not a stuffy or formal time. It spoke of an intimacy with Christ and with one another!

From these texts it is clear that a peace meal was not a gathering of people who individually endeavored to enjoy God in their own way. RATHER the peace meal was a time when the people of God enjoyed the Lord together!

This is the portrayed in our text when it came to the establishing of Saul's kingdom. The people of God not only enjoyed deep and abiding communion with God, but as they ate they enjoyed a depth in their

communion with one another! And that clearly is the nature of the fellowship created by Christ when He established His own Kingdom!

Truly, God never intended that salvation be an independent thing; yes it is personal, but not private. Rather, salvation brings with it a family, joined together, living, loving, learning, and enjoying the Lord. And as this is experienced, as we sup on the Lord, we commune together

- Reflecting on God's salvation.
- Speaking of the difficulties from which we have been delivered during the past week.
- Corporately abiding in Christ.

Truly there is a corporateness about the kingdom of God; a shared communion whereby together we proclaim and enjoy the Lord together. Such is the nature, calling, and so THE FRUIT of the kingdom of God! As a picture of the kingdom of Christ, Saul's kingdom at its best brought with it a glorious enjoying of God and one another.

And this therefore becomes a special calling of each and everyone of us here this day. Yes we must invest in our walks with Christ and so endeavor to enjoy Him forever but we must do this as a family, a community, a group.

Fire

I love the nature of fire. Years ago I watched a play in which a person sat in a crowded room with a lit candle in his hand... hording the light. The rest of the room was dark and the people in it asked that the one with the lit candle share so that they too might enjoy the light. Yet the individual was selfish and concerned only for himself. He thought that in giving the flame away it might impoverish the little light of the candle he did have. And so he separated himself from the group, sat in the corner, and there clung to his little candle.

In time his shame got the best of him and so he begrudgingly allowed another person to take their unlit candle and tilt it into his. And do you know what happened? Far from diminishing the light; it grew in intensity! Soon there were five, six, ten, and then twenty candles alight in the room. And soon after this, a fire place was lit and the entire room was filled with the light and the warmth of the fire.

This is the nature of Biblical fellowship. The more it is enjoyed, the deeper it becomes, the broader it spreads and the warmer it becomes. And yet there always is the fear that in giving it away, you yourself might be impoverished.

Let me assure you, that never happens. Like fire, the more it is shared the greater it is enjoyed. Accordingly from this passage, let me describe for you how kingdom living was intended to be enjoyed.

- It is a group of soldiers reclining at a table (it is not necessarily a literal one).
- Filled with the knowledge that God is well-pleased with them, they eat together.
- And as they eat, they talk about
 - The Lord.
 - His Kingdom.
 - The battle they currently are in.
 - The mini-victories.

- The shameful defeats.
- Their fears.
- Their triumphs.
- Their regrets.
- Yet there is an air of confidence in the room.
 - No one fears condemnation (cf. Romans 8:1).
 - All are at peace with God (cf. Romans 5:1-2).

And it is this confidence which carries the conversation to an intimacy and depth unknown by the worldling.

Brothers and sisters, this is one of the benefits rarely enjoyed today by the body of Christ. Yet this is what we were made for. But we must capture the vision. So long as we think that Christianity revolves around an individual relationship with God to the exclusion of all others, we will fall short of God's best for us in this life.

Christianity is a team sport. Christ came in His first advent NOT for the individual, BUT for His bride; the church.⁵ And when Christ returns it will NOT be to usher you or me into a private time of fellowship with Himself that will last forever; when Christ returns it will be for the purpose of redeeming the bride of Christ to Himself once and for all.⁶ As such the gifts we have received have been given to be used to bless the body.⁷ Each and every one of us has been given the charge to “stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24). This is what fellowship is all about. To do anything less is to “forsake the body” even though you are here.⁸ As such it is not enough to make it to glory; we must labor that those in our midst make there as well.⁹

The Spartans

You know one of the most effective armies in the ancient world was the Spartans.

What was their secret?

As an army they placed

- Table fellowship.
- Living for each other.
- Serving each other.
- Walking together.

as one of their highest priorities (though they fell way short of what occurred in the first century church).

See they knew that you couldn't be an effective military unit without such camaraderie. And so as a culture they sacrificed to participate and so invest in each other's lives. And this is the case when it

⁵ Compare Acts 20:28

⁶ Compare Revelation 21:1-2

⁷ Compare 1 Corinthians 12:7

⁸ Compare Hebrews 10:25

⁹ Compare Romans 9:3

comes to effectiveness in the body of Jesus Christ. Fellowship must be a high priority. Investing in each other must be a principle ministry in our lives. Truly to fall short of this calling is to handicap the ministry that God has given the body of Christ.¹⁰

May God give us the grace both to value and so enjoy the fellowship which accompanies the Kingdom of God!

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Feel free to visit Bethel Presbyterian Church when in Broomfield, Colorado. Bethel Presbyterian Church meets at Broomfield High School, Eagle (10th Street) and Main, Broomfield, Colorado. The telephone number of the church is 303-469-6912. The worship services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. each Sunday. Bethel Presbyterian Church is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

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About the Preacher

Greg Thurston preached this sermon on December 30, 2007. Greg is the preacher at Bethel Presbyterian Church

¹⁰ Compare Ephesians 4:16