

Sailing With Paul

Simple Papers for Young Christians

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Chapter 9

Communion

GOD has given us His truth that our thoughts may be fashioned like unto His own. Our previous study, on standing and state, naturally prepares the way for the consideration of this blessed theme of realized fellowship with GOD, **"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began"** (II Timothy 1:9). He, who has thus so richly blessed us, desires to have us in living, happy communion with Himself, and this is the instinctive desire of every renewed soul. By nature and practice alienated and an enemy to GOD by wicked works, when grace has wrought in the soul, when new birth has taken place, at once there springs up a yearning for fellowship with the blessed One whom now we address by the SPIRIT as **"Abba, Father."**

Now this communion is not a human thing. Man in the flesh can have no fellowship with GOD. It is only known and enjoyed in the power of the SPIRIT. The direct means for its maintenance are the Word of GOD and prayer. In the Bible GOD speaks to me. In prayer I speak to Him. I use the word prayer here in its widest application; not merely as offering petitions, but as lifting up the heart to GOD in praise likewise.

We have some blessed examples of this in the experience of Paul. Take, for instance, the first eleven chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. In chapters 1 to 8 inclusive, GOD, by His SPIRIT, unfolds what we might call the glorious divine philosophy of the plan of salvation; while in chapters 9 to 11 He unfolds His dispensational ways. What is the result of the soul's apprehension of all this? It leads to an outburst of praise that fairly bubbles up in exultant joy

from the apostle's soul in verses 33 of chapter 11: **"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"** This is communion; and a most hallowed and blissful thing it is thus to be taken up with the marvelous counsels and ways of GOD.

In Ephesians 1 we have another lovely sample of the same thing. In the early part of the chapter there is a wonderful opening-up of GOD's eternal purpose. Then from verse 15 the apostle is in prayer that others may enter into and enjoy these precious things, so infinitely beyond mere human comprehension. Again in chapter 3 the truth of the great mystery, which I hope to take up in the next paper of this series, is opened up, and in verse 14 he says: **"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"** - and what is the burden of this prayer? That the believers to whom he writes, **"May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God"** (Ephesians 3:18, 19).

And once more a volume of praise goes up from his own heart: **"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, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"** (Ephesians 3:20, 21). The truth gets such a grip on Paul's soul that he longs for all saints to share it, and his heart goes out to GOD, the AUTHOR of it in unbounded adoration. Again, I repeat, this is - communion.

It is not a happy feeling or a state of religious excitement. It is the soul's enjoyment of what GOD in His Word, has made known for our edification. He calls us His friends, and He would have His friends share His thoughts.

Thus it is now; there can be no true fellowship with GOD apart from feeding on the Word of GOD. Reading good books will not take the place of this thoughtful meditation on the Holy Scriptures. Undoubtedly, the Spirit-taught soul will soon begin to discern GOD's mind, and see His glory manifested even in inanimate nature; but he needs a mind well stored with Scripture to lead him up to this.

And now another important point: there can be no true communion with GOD while unjudged evil is tolerated in the life. You cannot enjoy GOD and indulge in sin at the same time; even as you cannot enjoy meditation on the Scriptures while practicing that which is unholy. In Bunyan's Bible is was written, "This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book." Don't overlook this, dear young believer. Be clean. Be practically holy; then you can enjoy GOD's Word, and the HOLY SPIRIT will use it as the means of leading out your heart to GOD and filling your soul with praise. And this is being in communion with the Highest.

Men talk of being "In touch with the Infinite," who both ignore the Scriptures as the written Word, and CHRIST JESUS as the living Word. And by that they mean to reach a state of philosophic calmness of mind which, in the case of men proudly turning from the Cross of CHRIST, is but as though a blind man on the edge of a precipice refused the hand stretched forth to save him, and plunged headlong over, seeking calmly to assure himself that he would alight on a bed of down in place of jagged rocks. His calmness would be but foolhardiness; and so it all this empty talk of being in tune with the SPIRIT of the Universe while refusing GOD's

testimony.

Do not be deceived by the sham, my reader; but with the Word of GOD speaking in power to your soul, walk in the SPIRIT, fulfilling not the lusts of the flesh, and you shall know the real and the true. Thus shall you enjoy, on earth, a sweet foretaste of what is to be the everlasting portion of all the redeemed - participation in the joy of your Lord.

~ end of chapter 9 ~
