5/17/26

Sunday 1st Message

My Gospel and My Heart

Philemon 1:8-14

Yesterday's Saturday prayer journal message contained the following words: We must hold onto the living word through worship, yet we often miss out on it. It states that even when the Lord overcame the devil's temptations and sent him away, he did so through his word. Although the Lord could have easily defeated Satan and done everything as he pleased using the authority of Christ that he possessed, he chose instead to use the word recorded in Deuteronomy. This scene demonstrates that the written word is still alive and capable of crushing the head of Satan.

He said that receiving this living and active word is the standard of worship and the standard of prayer. He also said that if it does not happen, we must keep doing it until it does. And he said that if this does not happen, we have, in fact, lost everything. In worship, every element - such as praising, prayer, and offering - is precious, but the very heart of it is receiving the word. The reason this is of utmost importance is that God does everything through his word. The fact that the words of Deuteronomy, which were written down, crushed Satan's head and defeated his temptation is truly a significant message for us.

Therefore, those who receive the word conquer the situation and crush the head of Satan. They overcome every problem, analyze it, and overturn all things. Anyone can do this simply by living according to the word they have received. Moses completely overturned all the problems that arose in the wilderness, and God did this to fulfill the covenant that Israel must enter Canaan. When we receive the word, it is God's will, so it will surely be fulfilled, and we will conquer. Receiving this word is the purpose of our worship service today.

1. My Gospel

1) In Philemon 1:4, Apostle Paul refers to God as "my God". While we often use the phrase "my God", we rarely use the phrase "my gospel" as seen in verse 13. The phrase "my gospel" also appears in Romans 16:25, suggesting that the gospel God had given him had become so deeply a part of him that it was now inseparable from his very being.
2) The gospel is the answer to everything in this world and the standard for every aspect of life. Therefore, there is nothing in this world as precious as the gospel. It would not be an exaggeration to say that my attitude toward this gospel determines the course of my entire life.
3) Paul refers to this gospel as "my gospel". Many biblical scholars believe that after Paul first received the gospel, God allowed him about ten years to prepare. This period was a time for Apostle Paul to establish the gospel within himself, verify its truth through the Old Testament, and prepare himself as an evangelist to lead the disciples of his generation. It must have been a time of deep reflection on the gospel.
4) The Bible tells us that after these preparations were complete, Barnabas went to Tarsus to find Saul, and the two of them ministered together in the church of Antioch for a year, teaching a large number of people. Through this experience, Paul must have come to understand what the gospel is and the extent of God's desire for this gospel movement.
5) While this was happening, five men began to fast and serve the Lord. At that time, God spoke to them, telling them to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the word he intended to do. In accordance with this word, they laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them out (Acts 13:1-3). In this way, Paul came to see firsthand what the gospel truly was in the field. He witnessed many miraculous words and saw ample evidence of people being set free from curses because of the gospel alone.

6) And during his second evangelism journey, he saw disciples everywhere he went who had received this gospel and were prepared to carry on this gospel movement; and during his third evangelism journey, he witnessed an explosive spread of the gospel throughout Asia, which must have reaffirmed to him the true nature of this gospel. It was through these experiences that he came to make the resolution to be taken into captivity for the sake of this gospel.
7) This is the confession that emerged in Acts 20:24, “But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” After receiving the gospel as a shock, there must have been a time of prayer to restore this gospel deep within himself and a time to view the word through the eyes of the gospel. During this time, God must have prepared the message of an evangelist who would lead countless disciples in the future.
8) Through this process, many eyes must have been opened, and through people prepared in this way, the church was revived, the field was saved, disciples were found, and they were empowered to carry out the gospel movement on their own. Ultimately, the confession of Apostle Paul - made as he headed his way to Rome - must have been his true personal confession.
9) In 2 Corinthians 12:2, there is the expression, “whether in the body or out of the body I do not know”. Similarly, I believe the phrase “my gospel” expresses this state - whether I am the gospel or the gospel is me. I believe that when we receive the word, see the evidence, and have our eyes opened, we too will become people of the gospel to the point where such expressions naturally flow from us. And I believe that, as a result, we will naturally lead lives like that of Paul. May this blessing be upon us all today.

2. My Heart

1) He is my very heart. This is how Paul refers to Onesimus. Paul had many disciples, and in Romans 16, there are seven important titles such as “patron”, “fellow worker”, and “host”, but the title “my heart” is not among them.
2) How did Paul come to have so many disciples, including those who could be called his very heart? There were twelve apostles, all of whom were dedicated to the gospel movement and most of whom were martyred, yet no other apostles had as many disciples as Paul did.
3) The reason is likely the passion for the true gospel and world evangelization. When we preach the gospel as it is presented in the Bible, those who are prepared will respond. In the process, people will emerge who are willing to dedicate their entire lives and even risk their lives for this gospel. These are people in whom world evangelization is already deeply rooted; therefore, as long as we hold fast to the true gospel and the message of world evangelization, our disciples will not leave us.
4) It is during this process that disciples who are like the very heart begin to emerge. As you continue to personalize the gospel and make living according to God’s word a way of life, your eyes will be opened to God’s will, and once you understand evangelism, God will give you a message. You will no longer merely relay the gospel; you will be able to share a message that leads other disciples.
5) Then you can become an evangelist with a team, and you’ll be able to engage in team ministry, establish mission homes, and plant regional churches. In this way, you will become someone who possesses the true gospel and the message of world evangelization. May we all be blessed with the grace to have disciples who are like our very heart.