

July 25

2 Corinthians 9: 11: Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. 12: For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; 13: Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; 14: And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

The Holy Spirit is using Paul to describe what God is doing by providing a need to our brethren, while at the same time providing brethren with all things necessary to meet that need. As in all things which God works amongst his people, God is bringing glory to his name because it is God who is doing the giving, both to the giver, as well as to the receiver.

Most think that it only takes the grace of God to make his people cheerful givers. The truth is it takes the grace of God to make his people cheerful receivers as well. Most think it is the grace of God to provide plenty so that brethren can provide for their brethren. The truth is it is the grace of God to provide a need so that brethren can receive from their brethren. But this ministration cannot be successful when merely performed in the flesh. It is only accomplished in spirit and in truth by Christ the Word making his people willing in the day of his power through the gospel word, teaching us how God brings glory to his name using both the plenty he provides to brethren as well as the need God provides to brethren. By nature we simply do not and cannot understand the importance of giving and receiving.

The Holy Spirit tells us through the prophet Isaiah that “as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Is 55: 10-11) Once the rain and snow has accomplished God’s purpose they do return from where they came. But they do not return in the same form. The word of God is the same way as God works in his people through this ministration of giving and receiving.

It is God, by his sovereign word revealing the great sacrifice of Christ our Savior that strengthens faith in God and his ability, so that though the believer may not have a surplus in material things, the believer beholds we have all sufficiency in Christ, which makes his people cheerful givers. This is how God “makes all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” Likewise, it is God, by his sovereign word revealing our need for God to provide us all spiritual blessings in Christ by which God makes his needy people willing to receive all spiritual provision from God’s hand and to see that temporal provision provided by our brethren is coming directly from God’s hand. So it is the effectual word of God that makes both the giver and the receiver.

But like the rain and snow, once the word has accomplished this purpose, the word returns in a different form than it comes down. The word returns to God in the form of “thanksgiving to God” both from the giver as well as the receiver. Just as we do for God’s gift of election, predestination, adoption, redemption, regeneration, preservation, resurrection and glorification, in this ministration of giving and receiving, when the word has accomplished its purpose in both parties, we each “glorify God.” It is because we behold that this ministration has far more to do with God providing a great gift to the spiritual need of both the giver and receiver, than with simply the giver providing material needs for the receiver. God works this grace in us by his word to bring praise and glory to his name, to bring his saints into subjection to God, to draw out intercession from his people on behalf of one another, to make his people long for one another, all while God draws us each to the feet of the great Intercessor. When giver and receiver are brought to behold that this effectual work of God by his Word is a gift to each of us by our Head, who is God’s greatest gift unto us, it causes words of praise and glory to ascend up to him like the rain and snow after it has accomplished its effectual work. Then each involved is brought to exclaim with Paul, “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”