

Series: Acts

Title: Prayer for Wisdom and Power

Scripture: Acts 20: 36; Ephesians 1: 15-23

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Only God can make his gospel effectual in the hearts of his people and preserve his church in the midst of this cruel world. In the gospel Paul preached and in the example he exhorts the elders at Ephesus to follow, Paul is teaching them that humility of mind is trust God, trusting his Son, knowing that only God can make his word of grace REALLY REAL in our hearts.

Acts 20: 32: And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Acts 20: 36: And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

Would you like to hear Paul's prayer? We may not know the exact words Paul spoke at this time but in two places in his letter to the Ephesians, Paul says what his prayer for them is.

Ephesians 1: 15: Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16: Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

Paul says from the first hour I heard of your faith until now, this has been my prayer for you. This was his prayer for them as he departed from Ephesus.

Ephesians 1: 17: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Proposition: They knew the Lord Jesus Christ and believed on him, but Paul prays that God will give them more wisdom and revelation of him. He is praying for two things specifically: that Christ be made more and more the Wisdom of God and secondly the Power of God.

I. GROWTH IN THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM

God, the Father of glory, gives this revelation.

Ephesians 1: 17: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation

James 1:5: If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

The Wisdom and Revelation God the Father gives is given in spirit by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1: 17: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation: 18: The eyes of your understanding (HEART) being enlightened

1 Corinthians 2: 10: But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11...the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12: Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

The Wisdom and Revelation God the Father gives of his glory through the Holy Spirit is knowledge in the Lord Jesus Christ, his Son.

Ephesians 1: 17: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

2 Corinthians 4:6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

God grows believers in wisdom and knowledge of God the Father, by growing them in wisdom and knowledge of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. If we would know the Wisdom and Power of God it will be because through the Holy Spirit God makes us to know Christ the Wisdom and Power of God.

The reason Paul prays for this increase in wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ is that they might rest in hope.

Ephesians 1: 18:...that ye may know what is the hope of his calling,

Faith and hope go hand-in-hand.

Galatians 5:5: For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Our hope is that one day we shall awake in perfect righteousness, conformed to Christ, with no interruption of communion with him--“hope of righteousness.”

1 John 3:2: Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Hope is created in the believer when Christ takes up residence in the soul.

Colossians 1: 27: To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

As God grows us in the knowledge of Christ, he increases our faith and hope of glory and this is how the believer is made willing to separate ourselves from this world to Christ.

1 John 3: 3: And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

The Pharisees commanded men to separate themselves but they did not do so by believing on Christ and preaching Christ. Christ is the Key of knowledge. They took away the key of knowledge.

Paul asks the Father to give more wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ that these brethren might grow in faith and in hope and be separated unto God in Christ.

Faith and hope are grown the more the believer is made to see that we are his inheritance.

Ephesians 1: 18:...that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

It is true that Christ Jesus is our portion.

Lamentations 3:24: The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

But our assurance of our hope is FIRST, that in Christ, the LORD has made us *his inheritance*.

Ephesians 1: 18: His inheritance in the saints—the church v23: **Which is his body, the fulness of him.**

Be sure you get this: The union of Christ with the church is a union so real, that the body, made up of each redeemed saint, must be where he is, in order for Christ to be complete.

The LORD typified this in Israel in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 32: 8: When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.
9: For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

CHRIST IS THE WISDOM OF GOD IN WHOM GOD MANIFEST HIS WISDOM IN MAKING HIS CHILDREN HIS INHERITANCE

Ephesians 1: 3-8 is a good New Testament commentary on what the LORD typified in Israel which we just read about in Deuteronomy 32. The wisdom of God the Father blessed his children with all spiritual blessings, giving us Christ our inheritance, by choosing us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that is, by making his people his inheritance. The wisdom of God the Father is that in Christ our Surety, God's elect children would be holy and without blame before him, even in our fall. The wisdom of God the Father in Christ is that he predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself. In all this, the All-Wise God our Father, abounded toward his elect in all Wisdom and prudence, by sending forth his Son, Christ the Wisdom of God, to accomplish our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace—all in harmony with his justice.

He makes his Wisdom known to us when he makes us to behold Christ his Wisdom:

Ephesians 1: 9: Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him:

Everything we saw up to this verse describes how God the Father, in infinite wisdom, made his people the inheritance of Christ Jesus his Son. When his elect are called by Christ the Power and Wisdom of God he makes us to see that we also have obtained an inheritance and it is Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 1: 11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12: That we should be to the praise of his glory, [the glory of God the Father, who in wisdom] **first trusted in Christ [the Wisdom of God.]**

And when God the Father, through the Holy Spirit made Christ your Wisdom, you trusted in Christ even as the Father.

Ephesians 1: 13: In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

When God gives us faith and seals us with the Holy Spirit of promise it is a foretaste of Christ Jesus our inheritance.

Ephesians 1: 14: Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

So first, Paul prays that God the Father might **cause them to see, believe, grow in hope by giving them wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Wisdom of God.**

II. NEXT PAUL PRAYS THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THE POWER OF GOD IN CHRIST.

Ephesians 1: 19: And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,

Paul is speaking of the greatness of the power he works in the believer, when the sinner is born again of the Holy Spirit. **Eph 1: 1: And you *hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*** As God increases our understanding of the power he exercised toward us when we were born of the Spirit of God then we will rest in his power to teach us, to keep us and to deliver us the rest of your days.

The comparison Paul makes is between Christ's resurrection and God's regeneration of the believer

Ephesians 1: 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20: Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

Christ's body was lifeless in the grave—every sinner is dead in trespasses and in sins--you and I were spiritually dead; Christ's resurrection was solely the work of God—so is a sinner's regeneration—born of the Holy Spirit; In power God set Christ at his own right hand in heaven—in Christ that is exactly where those born of God are seated:

Ephesians 2: 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6: And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

There is even more than the exercise of sovereign power in giving spiritual life, though that power is exceedingly great. Also, there is the Power of God's glory—his holiness—his faithfulness to his own Word. In the everlasting covenant, God the Son in his Surety engagements agreed to honor God's law, to fulfill every word of God, and to be made sin for his people that God might be just and the Justifier of all who believe. God the Father promised to glorify his Son by raising him and giving him the Crown rights, the rights of the Firstborn.

Isaiah 53: 11: He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12: Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The same glory of God's holiness that demanded justice be poured out upon Christ when the Father made him sin for us is the power of his glory that also demanded he be raised from the dead. It is the exceeding greatness of his power that demanded that Christ be given his inheritance so that he be able to divide his inheritance the children he bought with his own blood. It is the same power and glory that demands each of his redeemed be given spiritual life.

The exceeding greatness of his power toward us: is both his sovereign power to effectually regenerate us to newness of life and the power of his holy name which demanded we be born of his Spirit.

The Authority the Father has given to his Righteous Servant is his glorifying gift to Christ as Mediator. And it is God the Father's gift to his church.

Ephesians 1: 21: [God the Father has set Christ Jesus his Son,] Far above **all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and **every** name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22: And hath put **all things** under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over **all things to the church**, 23: Which is **his body**, the **fulness of him** that filleth all in all.**

Now go back to Deut 32. We saw his Wisdom in making his people his inheritance and setting the bounds of the people for the sake of his children. Now we see his power to do them good.

Deuteronomy 32: 8:...the most High set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel For the LORD'S portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance. **10: He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he**

instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. 11: As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: 12: So the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no strange god with him. 13: He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; 14: Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.

Paul's prayer to God the Father is that through the holy Spirit he might make these Ephesian's know more and more that Christ Jesus truly is the Power and Wisdom of God. This will make you and me stop warring with men and trust God, resting all our care in the hands of him who cares for us. This is the everlasting love of Christ—the Wisdom and Power of God--by which we are constrained.

Ephesians 3: 14: For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15: Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16: That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 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, 21: Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.