

Hebrews

Hebrews 13:20-21 – Words of Wisdom - Part 8

June 13, 2010

I. Words of Wisdom

A. **Hebrews 13:20-25** . . . Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, [21] equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. [22] But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. [23] Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you. [24] Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. [25] Grace be with you all.

B. Prayer

II. Words of Wisdom – Equipped, enabled, aided by the God of peace.

A. **Now the God of peace** (*who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord*), [21] **equip you in every good thing to do His will**

1. This statement in verse 21 is a request for God to equip or prepare us in every area necessary for us to do God's will.
2. We see in this request two sides of the same coin – God's equipping and our doing His will, or God's working and our working, or God's grace, gifting, giving, and empowerment and our activities as a Christian aided by God's grace, gifting, giving, and empowering.
3. God's part and our part do not represent two distinct, separate parts, but rather the merging of two parts into one complete whole.
 - a. Not to get fancy here in the use of words, but we call this **synergy** in our day. And though the definition of synergy is insufficient for describing God's part in this interaction between God and man, nevertheless, synergy means the cooperative interaction of two or more parts or forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects.
 - b. We see both the reality and beauty this synergy between God and man in these words from Moses to the Israelites about going into and taking the Promised Land. We read in **Deuteronomy 12:29-31** . . . "When the LORD your God cuts

off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, [30] beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?' [31] "You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

- c. In the New Testament, Paul, speaking to Christians, puts it this way in **Philippians 2:12-13** . . . So then, my beloved, just as **you have always obeyed**, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling; [13] for **it is God who is at work in you**, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.
- 4. Now it should not come as a surprise to any of us that of the two actors involved – God and us – God plays the major role and we play the minor role. And let me give you three reasons why this is true.
 - a. **First**, as Paul said to the philosophers of Athens: “In God we live and move and have our existence (Acts 17:28).
 - (1) In other words, God is the creator of life and He enables us to live an animated life – that is, He enables us to think, reason, conceptualize, speak, see, smell, hear, taste, touch, interact with other humans and even some animals, stand, sit, lay, walk, run, jump, climb, slide – and I think you are getting the picture.
 - (2) But even more than that, when Paul added the word “existence” to his statement, He was saying that God is the all-pervading, permanently sustaining life-force in us individually and in the universe entirely. In essence what Paul is saying here is that if we remove God there is no life because life was not just created by God, it is sustained, moment by moment by God.
 - b. **Second**, it is God who pays the penalty for sin, who breaks the power of sin, who sets sin’s captives free, who puts His divine nature into us when we repent and come to faith in Him, who protects us from being overwhelmed by the evil one, who empowers us to stand against the wiles of the devil, who convicts us when we sin, who forgives us and restores our

relationship to Himself when we confess our sin, who disciplines us as needed, who trains us in the ways of meekness and humility, who opens His ears to our prayers, who fills us with the Holy Spirit, who gives us the instructional and life-giving scriptures, who makes us part of the community of believers known as the Church, who comforts us in our times of trial and tribulation, who adds grace upon strength in our times of suffering, who gives us giftings or certain abilities for use in serving Him, who rewards our faith and love, who provides for all our needs – physically, emotionally, and spiritually, who leads us in paths of righteousness (for His name sake),

- c. **Third**, our role is relatively simple. In essence, we are to trust in God and love God – and give practical application to our faith and love by obeying God. And so we see that God’s part is huge compared to our part which is small by comparison.

B. What are the ways in which God equips us or prepares us – in every good thing – to do His will?

1. First of all, He frees us from the enslaving power of sin:

- a. **Romans 6:3-7** . . . Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? [4] Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. [5] For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, [6] knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; [7] for he who has died is freed from sin.
- b. **Romans 6:12-14** . . . Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, [13] and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. [14] For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

2. Second, He enables us to partake of or share in His nature:

- a. **II Peter 1:2-4** . . . Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; [3] seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. [4] For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.
 - b. **I John 3:7-9** . . . Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; [8] the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. [9] No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.
3. Third, it is His will that we be conformed to the image of Christ, that we become holy as He is holy – and so He empowers us to put off the old nature and put on the new.
- a. **Colossians 3:5-10** . . . Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. [6] For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, [7] and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. [8] But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. [9] Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, [10] and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—
 - b. **Ephesians 4:17-24** . . . So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, [18] being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; [19] and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. [20] But you did not learn Christ in this way, [21] if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, [22] that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which

is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, [23] and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, [24] and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

4. He equips us through the Holy Scriptures
 - a. **II Timothy 3:16-17** . . . All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; [17] so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
 - b. **II Timothy 2:14-18** . . . Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. [15] Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. [16] But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, [17] and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, [18] men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.
5. He equips us by giving us the Holy Spirit
 - a. **Luke 11:11-13** . . . "Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? [12] "Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? [13] "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"
 - b. **I Thessalonians 4:7-8** . . . For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. [8] So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.
 - c. **John 16:8** . . . "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;
 - d. **John 16:12-15** . . . "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. [13] "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. [14] "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. [15] "All things that the Father has are Mine;

therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.

- e. **Mark 13:9-11** . . . "But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them. [10] "The gospel must first be preached to all the nations. [11] "When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.
- 6. He equips us by giving us the privilege of prayer
 - a. **Proverbs 15:29** . . . The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.
 - b. **Philippians 4:6** . . . Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
 - c. **Colossians 4:2** . . . Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;
 - d. **I Thessalonians 5:17** . . . pray without ceasing;
- 7. He equips us and trains us and refines us through trials and tribulations
 - a. **Psalms 119:67, 71** . . . Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word. [71] It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.
 - b. **Romans 5:3-5** . . . And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; [4] and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; [5] and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- 8. He equips us through pastors and teachers, good books, music, and the body of Christ.

III. Conclusion

- A. But I urge you, brethren, **bear with this word of exhortation**, for I have written to you briefly.