

Prayer Power Tower

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Preparation

We began our study of Genesis at the beginning, and now look to the future and our hope in the resurrection of Christ. Many scholars would suggest that before beginning a study of Romans, as we will do this week, it's wise to seriously reflect on themes from the Old Testament, particularly Genesis. And those who gathered on the fiftieth day after the Sabbath of Passover week were well aware of the words of the Law and the Prophets when they encountered the Spirit of the Lord: *"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?' Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine'" (Acts 2:1-12 NIV). What would your response have been that day if you had witnessed this event? Would you have been amazed, in awe and wonder? Or are you more of a skeptic, who would have figured that those silly people had ingested a little bit too much wine?*

Scripture

Having sunk our roots deep into the events of Genesis, we now turn to the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans. There is much from our past study that will help to make sense of this letter, written to a church that Paul has never visited at the time of his writing. As we begin this study, be open to the great depth of meaning in the Apostle's letter, even in its opening greeting (Romans 1:1-7). Know

also that faithful men of the past, including Augustine, Luther and Wesley, have found Romans to be the impetus for their own realization of salvation.

- A typical ancient letter began with a self-introduction and a greeting. Paul introduces himself to the Christians in Rome as a servant – a man totally at the disposal of his master (Romans 1:1). And who is that Master? Christ Jesus, and none other. Can you fairly introduce yourself to others in the same manner?
- The letter to the Romans calls them, and us, to be Christ-centered in all that we do. Throughout our study we will discover that much in the letter challenges any faith we might have in our own spirituality. Pray that the depth of this letter will be opened to you during this time of our study together.
- Paul continues his greeting by summarizing the gospel as a message concerning God's Son, descended from David, and declared to be the Son of God (1:2-5). This is an affirmation of both Jesus' full humanity, as a Jew who was a descendent of King David, and His full divinity, as the Son of God.
- These greeting sentences end with a blessing, perhaps very familiar to you: *"Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:7).*

Adoration

With early believers, we celebrate Pentecost, the birth of the church. As you spend time with the Lord this day, be open to that holy fire filling you with a flame burning brightly for all to see.

Breathe upon Us

R. Kelso Carter, 1891

*Breathe upon us, Lord, from Heaven,
Fill us with the Holy Ghost;
Promise of the Father given,
Send us now a Pentecost.*

Refrain: Breathe upon us, breathe upon us,
With Thy love our hearts inspire.
Breathe upon us, breathe upon us,
Lord, baptize us now with fire.

*While the Spirit hovers o'er us,
Open all our hearts, we pray;
To Thine image, Lord, restore us,
Witness in our souls today. **Refrain**
Lift us, Lord, O lift us higher,
From the carnal mind set free;
Fill us with refining fire,
Give us perfect liberty. **Refrain***

Confession

Paul declares that he was called to be apostle (Romans 1:1), and we are called to be saints who belong to Jesus (1:6). How often do you consider your being a follower of Jesus to be an individual calling from God to you? Our basic call is to discipleship, and all believers are called in this sense. We are called to have faith and trust in God as we see Him in Jesus Christ. Often people associate *calling* only with pastors. But the apostle here reminds each of the Romans (and each of us) that we are called for a holy purpose, and it is God who calls us to our ministry, whatever it may be, and even to our salvation itself. Being “set apart,” do you feel up to the task for which you are called? As you spend time in prayers of confession, seek to know in your heart to what you have been called, and pray for guidance and direction to keep you on track, for forgiveness for your wanderings from that calling, and for wisdom to see the path you must follow.

Following your time of confession, invite God to rejoice your heart and transform your life through the profound truth of these beloved words:

For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent His Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him. (John 3:16-17 NLT)

Here is life: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

Thanksgiving

So often we look to the things around us to see God's blessing in our lives. Remember to thank the Lord for His appearance to people like Paul. Even in his suffering, the apostle gave thanks for his calling, and for the blessing of Jesus Christ in his life.

- Thank God for those men to whom God spoke and inspired the writings of Scripture that we have today.
- Thank Him for the way in which He has touched the lives of many over the centuries who have helped us to gain better understanding of His Word.
- Thank God for those who have willingly accepted His call upon their lives, from Abraham to... you!
- Give sincere thanks for all those who have been a beacon of light along your road, directing you in right paths.
- Give thanks for ways that godly people minister to you through holy Scripture.
- Give thanks that for the interpretation given us through Jesus Christ: “*beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself*” (Luke 24:27 NIV).

Supplication

The Bible assures us that “*The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results*” (James 5:16b NLT). Intimidated by the “righteous” part? Be encouraged by the truth that God gives to all believers the very righteousness of Christ, and pray confidently, even boldly – especially for those who stand shoulder to shoulder with you in this great ministry of prayer.

Daniel Adams, Kristen Agnew, Audrey and Bill Allen, Corinne Baker, Jon Baker, Cyndy Beech, Joyce Bett, Ed and Goldie Black, Betty Bowser, Barbara and David ‘Skip’ Byers, Jan Carr, Lisa Cook, Ray and Jane Cornelius, Jennifer and John Culp, Ed Daggitt, Gina Brenda Dolan, Jane Dunmire, Ruth Dykstra Entwistle, Mickey Edmiston, Becky Elliott, Janice Good, Dorothy Gooden, Kathleen Graham, Dorothy Henderson, John and Marilyn Hicks, Joy Holland, Suzanne Howat, Gail Jablonovsky, Alberta Keener, Louise Keough, Joann Kettler, Dana Krepps, Michelle Kurtz, Donna Lewis, Jean Longnecker, Linda Longwell, Nancy MacRae, Rich Madsen, Don McAninch, Myrna Jane McCamey, Greg McElroy, Colleen McGaffic, Bob and Joanne Miller, Sandy Minor, Shirley Minshull, Jane and John Moser, Alan and Terry Northcott, Sean O'Brien, Edna Orange, Phyllis Osborne, Hazel Palmer, Joan Pashley, Jeannette Patterson, Nancy Rankin, Joanne Raymer, Andrea and Tod Reiser, Rachael Renick, Megan (Illsley) Sateia, Erin Scott, John Snow, Mary Jane Surrena, Charles Timmons, Beth Utsch, Betty Walters, Toni Walters, Alice Winger, Tami Witzke and Chris Yeakle.

- Please pray for the members of our Worship and Music Committee, who help guide this central element of our life together as Christ's church.
- Please pray for our secretary Linda Auld and her family, as she serves Christ with us each day.
- Please pray for Pastors Janice and John, and for all who will be in worship this week, that God will speak to each of us through preaching.
- Please pray for the newest members of our church, our confirmands (along with their sponsors), that they will continue to grow with us as Christ's *Daring Disciples*.
- Please ask God to give us each the grace to actively commit ourselves to His mission, locally and globally.
- Please pray for the ongoing work of missions in Vietnam.
- Please ask Christ to guide our session and trustees, and all of us as His church, as we weigh specific plans for a proposed elevator and new building entryway.
- Please ask God to use *you* in surprising ways this week.