

LESSON 13

PROPHETIC PRAYERS

LESSON TEXT: ACTS 27:7-14;20-26

MEMORY VERSE

"For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, **24** Saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'" (Acts 27:23-24 NKJV)

KEY TERMS

Manifestation gifts—gifts with which the Holy Spirit equips the Church to express the fullness of God's love to the world.

Manifestation gifts are only one "category" of spiritual gifts that are given to the Church. These gifts exhibit supernatural power in specific situations to benefit both believers and unbelievers.

Prophetic—pertaining to or characteristic of a prophet or prophecy.

Vessel—(*metaphor*) a minister of the gospel, as appointed to bear the glad news of salvation to others and to otherwise do the will of God.

SUGGESTED EMPHASIS

The prayer ministry of the Apostle Paul displayed many facets, but one of the most interesting was the access it gave him to the realm of the prophetic. Through his prayer life, the Spirit of God gave the apostle revelation and discernment. For instance, it is implied that while prayerfully seeking sanction to further spread the gospel in Asia Minor, Paul was given the vision of the Macedonian asking him to come to that region and help them (Acts 16:9). Again, we can assume that while detained at Castle Antonia, Paul was in prayer when the Lord Jesus visited him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11). In one particular instance Paul detailed for us how his communion with God *preceded* his communication from God:

And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. (Acts 22:17,18)

Sessions of prayer and consecration were likely the most common means the Lord used to share revelations with the apostle.

Emphasis 1—A Worrisome Season for Sea Travel

The background for our lesson text is that the prisoner Paul was being carried to

Rome to make his appeal to Caesar. The record indicates that “the fast was now already past” (Acts 27:9), which is to say that it was after the Day of Atonement—in late September by our Western calendar. It was the stormy season in the Mediterranean sea, and Paul was concerned enough to seek God’s counsel about sea travel at this time. The message he received was that the voyage would be “with hurt and much damage” to crew and cargo. Although he shared this opinion with the Centurian who had charge of him (and who had commissioned the boat), that man listened instead to the advice of the ship’s captain. They were then traveling along the southern edge of Crete, but the captain observed that the island didn’t have a harbor at which they could conveniently spend the Winter. Moreover, the winds from the south were presently light, so the captain recommended pressing on to Italy.

Emphasis 2—God Speaking to and Through the Apostle

Predictably, in the open waters between Crete and southern Italy, the weather changed dramatically. A typhoon beset the ship for a great distance and many days. In the powerful grip of the storm, the sailors began to despair for the ship and their own lives. But Paul finally stood up in the midst of them and shared the Word God had just given him:

For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. (Acts 27:23–25).

We submit that this was the answer to the petitions and intercessions the apostle was certainly making during this catastrophic storm. It is impossible to imagine otherwise. Paul was a vessel of prayer. God could speak to him and through him because he was prayerful.

Emphasis 3—The Gifts Are Manifested Through Prayer

John Wesley, the English revivalist and founder of Methodism, was right. As he affirmed, “God does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it.” The demonstrations of prophetic insight that Paul exhibited were the result of his consistent prayer life. As the apostle himself taught, we have received the Spirit of God “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. 2:12). Therefore, it should be no surprise that a word of knowledge is sometimes available to a prayerful Saint. The Holy Ghost is assisting us in our prayers (Rom. 8:26), and He provides supernatural help. We should expect that a disciplined life of prayer makes the believer subject to the manifestation gifts of the Spirit. Only a vessel of prayer *can* manifest divine wisdom, special knowledge, supernatural faith, healing virtue, miracle-working power, prophetic utterances, ecstatic speech or the interpretation of tongues. Prayer is the power cord that connects us to the Spirit Who distributes gifts in the Church. We are powerless without prayer!

MISSIONS APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. At the beginning of their journey, before the storm hit, what made Paul uneasy about travel by sea?
2. Why is it likely Paul was praying the night that he received a revelation about the voyage?
3. How does a dedicated prayer life facilitate the manifestation of spiritual gifts?

WORLD MISSIONS PRAYER POINTS

- Let us pray to embrace prophetic prayers as a gift of God's desire to speak and work through us for His glory and our benefit.
- Let us pray for a dedicated prayer life through which the Holy Spirit manifest His presence in the Church.

REFERENCES

- Bounds, E.M.** *E.M. Bounds on Prayer*. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1997.
- Duffield, Guy P., and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave.** *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. Los Angeles: Foursquare Media, 2008.
- Floyd, Ronnie W.** *How to Pray: Developing an Intimate Relationship With God*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999.
- Shelley, Bruce L.** *Church History in Plain English*. 4th Edition. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013.
- Spence H.D.M., and Joseph S. Exell, eds.** *The Pulpit Commentary. Volume 18: Acts & Romans*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011.
- The KJV Online Dictionary.** <https://av1611.com/kjbp/kjv-dictionary/kjv-dictionary-index.html>
- Wilkerson, Gary.** *The Divine Intercessor: Pursuing Intercession and Intimacy With Jesus*. Lindale, TX: David Wilkerson Publications, Inc., 2002.