

BIBLICAL PRAXIS OF MISSION

Class 4: Prayer As The Means Of Grace For Faithful Sojourning

John Harrigan

I. THE DIVINE PURPOSE OF GRACE

- A. The Church is called to persevere in their calling to worship God and believe in his appointed Messiah, sanctifying themselves in preparation for his Kingdom, and testifying to all nations of the judgment and restoration of that Kingdom. However, perseverance in this calling is *wholly* dependent upon God and his grace, by means of the Holy Spirit's empowerment.

Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait (cf. prayer) for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit... ⁸ you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (NIV Acts 1:4-8)

- B. The Holy Spirit is given by God as a deposit (cf. 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:14; etc.) of the *grace* (Gk. *charis*) that will be given the saints at the revelation of Jesus (cf. 1 Pe. 1:13; Tit. 2:11; 1 Cor. 1:7; Gal. 1:6; etc.).

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you (i.e. resurrected body, cf. vv.3-5), searched intently and with the greatest care... ¹³ Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. (NIV 1 Peter 1:10-13)

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope-- the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. (NIV Titus 2:11-13)

1. "Grace" (Gk. *charis*) is a complex word with a wide range of meaning, both in the Greek and the English languages. However, it is ultimately within a governmental context, referring to the favor, goodwill, and joy (the root from which the Gk. *charis* is derived) of a governor toward his subjects.¹

- <5485> ca,rij *charis* {khar'-ece}

Meaning: 1) grace 1a) that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech 2) good will, loving-kindness, favour... 3) what is due to grace 3a) the spiritual condition of one governed by the power of divine grace 3b) the token or proof of grace, benefit...

Origin: from 5463; TDNT - 9:372,1298; n f

¹ Note the *introduction* (cf. Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4; Phlm. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:2; 2 John 1:3; Rev. 1:4) and *conclusion* (cf. Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 16:23; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 6:18; Eph. 6:24; Phil 4:23; Col. 4:18; 1 Thess. 5:28; 2 Thess. 3:18; 1 Tim. 6:21; 2 Tim. 4:22; Tit. 3:15; Phlm. 1:25; Heb. 13:25; 1 Pe. 5:12; 2 Pe. 3:18; Rev. 22:21) of almost every epistle in the New Testament.

Usage: AV - grace 130, favour 6, thanks 4, thank 4, thank + 2192 3, misc 9; 156²

- <5463> cai,rw *chairo* {khah'-ee-ro}

Meaning: 1) to rejoice, be glad 2) to rejoice exceedingly 3) to be well, thrive 4) in salutations, hail! 5) at the beginning of letters: to give one greeting, salute

Origin: a primary verb; TDNT - 9:359,1298; v

Usage: AV - rejoice 42, be glad 14, joy 5, hail 5, greeting 3, misc 5; 74³

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (^{NIV} Romans 1:7)

To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵ ***and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.*** (^{NIV} Revelation 1:4-5)

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (^{ESV} Romans 16:20)

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! ²¹ ***The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*** (^{ESV} Revelation 22:20-21)

2. The Greek word *charis* is used in translation for the Hebrew word *chen*, i.e. "favor".⁴ Throughout the Old Testament, the favor of the Lord in all its different forms, is expressed through divine favor and empowerment.

- <2580> !xe *chen* {khane}

Meaning: 1) favour, grace, charm 1a) favour, grace, elegance 1b) favour, acceptance

Origin: from 02603; TWOT- 694a; n m

² Luke 1:30; 2:40, 52; 4:22; 6:32ff; 17:9; John 1:14, 16f; Acts 2:47; 4:33; 6:8; 7:10, 46; 11:23; 13:43; 14:3, 26; 15:11, 40; 18:27; 20:24, 32; 24:27; 25:3, 9; Rom. 1:5, 7; 3:24; 4:4, 16; 5:2, 15, 17, 20f; 6:1, 14f, 17; 7:25; 11:5f; 12:3, 6; 15:15; 16:20; 1 Cor. 1:3f; 3:10; 10:30; 15:10, 57; 16:3, 23; 2 Cor. 1:2, 12, 15; 2:14; 4:15; 6:1; 8:1, 4, 6f, 9, 16, 19; 9:8, 14f; 12:9; 13:13; Gal. 1:3, 6, 15; 2:9, 21; 5:4; 6:18; Eph. 1:2, 6f; 2:5, 7f; 3:2, 7f; 4:7, 29; 6:24; Phil. 1:2, 7; 4:23; Col. 1:2, 6; 3:16; 4:6, 18; 1 Thess. 1:1; 5:28; 2 Thess. 1:2, 12; 2:16; 3:18; 1 Tim. 1:2, 12, 14; 6:21; 2 Tim. 1:2f, 9; 2:1; 4:22; Titus 1:4; 2:11; 3:7, 15; Phlm. 1:3, 25; Heb. 2:9; 4:16; 10:29; 12:15, 28; 13:9, 25; Jam. 4:6; 1 Pet. 1:2, 10, 13; 2:19f; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12; 2 Pet. 1:2; 3:18; 2 John 1:3; Jude 1:4; Rev. 1:4; 22:21.

³ Matt. 2:10; 5:12; 18:13; 26:49; 27:29; 28:9; Mk. 14:11; 15:18; Lk. 1:14, 28; 6:23; 10:20; 13:17; 15:5, 32; 19:6, 37; 22:5; 23:8; Jn. 3:29; 4:36; 8:56; 11:15; 14:28; 16:20, 22; 19:3; 20:20; Acts 5:41; 8:39; 11:23; 13:48; 15:23, 31; 23:26; Rom. 12:12, 15; 16:19; 1 Co. 7:30; 13:6; 16:17; 2 Co. 2:3; 6:10; 7:7, 9, 13, 16; 13:9, 11; Phil. 1:18; 2:17f, 28; 3:1; 4:4, 10; Col. 1:24; 2:5; 1 Thess. 3:9; 5:16; Jas. 1:1; 1 Pet. 4:13; 2 Jn. 1:4, 10f; 3 Jn. 1:3; Rev. 11:10; 19:7.

⁴ "The LXX employs this word to translate the Hebrew root meaning 'favor.' Thus, Noah found favor before the Lord (Gen. 6:8); Jacob sought favor in the eyes of Esau (Gen. 32:5). Similarly, those showing favor do gracious deeds. For example, showing kindness to the poor (Prov. 14:31) or generosity to all living (Ecclus. 7:33) was an act of grace. Likewise, the Psalms speak confidently of God's graciousness in hearing prayers, healing (6:2; 41:4), rescuing the oppressed (9:13), giving the Law (119:29), forgiving sin, rescuing the weak, and the like... Except for its emphasis on Jesus, the NT understanding of grace resembles that just surveyed... The divine grace rests on the infant Jesus (Luke 2:40), who subsequently grows in grace (2:52), speaks gracious words (4:22), and, like a divine man, passes unharmed through a hostile mob (4:30). Followers of Jesus, such as Stephen, full of 'grace,' do signs and wonders (Acts 6:8; cf. 14:3). Likewise, Paul assumes that recipients of God's grace will perform deeds of grace." [Paul J. Achtemeier, "Grace," *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 357.]

Usage: AV - grace 38, favour 26, gracious 2, misc 3; 69⁵

But Noah found favor (Hb. *chen*; Gk. *charis* LXX; “grace” KJV/NKJV) **in the eyes of the LORD.** (^{ESV} Genesis 6:8)

And the LORD had given the people favor (Hb. *chen*; Gk. *charis* LXX) **in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.** (^{ESV} Exodus 12:36)

I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe. ² You are the most handsome of the sons of men; grace (Hb. *chen*; Gk. *charis* LXX) **is poured upon your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever.** (^{ESV} Psalm 45:1-2)

He who loves purity of heart and has grace (Hb. *chen*; Gk. *charis* LXX) **on his lips, The king will be his friend.** (^{NKJV} Proverbs 22:11)

3. Because of God's righteousness and favor in light of humanity's sin and wickedness, the grace we receive from Him (Gk. *charisma*) is translated “gift” (versus the traditional word, Gk. *doma/doron/dorea/etc.*). Undeservedly, we receive “graces” of the Holy Spirit.

- <5486> *ca,risma charisma* {khar'-is-mah}

Meaning: 1) a favour with which one receives without any merit of his own 2) the gift of divine grace 3) the gift of faith, knowledge, holiness, virtue 4) the economy of divine grace, by which the pardon of sin and eternal salvation is appointed to sinners in consideration of the merits of Christ laid hold of by faith 5) grace or gifts denoting extraordinary powers... operating on their souls by the Holy Spirit.

Origin: from 5483; TDNT - 9:402,1298; n n

Usage: AV - gift 15, free gift 2; 17⁶

But the free gift (Gk. *charisma*) **is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace** (Gk. *charis*) **of God and the gift** (Gk. *dorea*) **by the grace** (Gk. *charis*) **of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. ¹⁶ The gift** (Gk. *dorema*) **is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift** (Gk. *charisma*) **arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. ¹⁷ For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace** (Gk. *charis*) **and of the gift** (Gk. *dorea*) **of righteousness will reign in life** (cf. resurrection) **through the One, Jesus Christ.** (^{NASB} Romans 5:15-17)

⁵ Gen. 6:8; 18:3; 19:19; 30:27; 32:6; 33:8, 10, 15; 34:11; 39:4, 21; 47:25, 29; 50:4; Exod. 3:21; 11:3; 12:36; 33:12f, 16f; 34:9; Num. 11:11, 15; 32:5; Deut. 24:1; Jdg. 6:17; Ruth 2:2, 10, 13; 1 Sam. 1:18; 16:22; 20:3, 29; 25:8; 27:5; 2 Sam. 14:22; 15:25; 16:4; 1 Ki. 11:19; Est. 2:15, 17; 5:2, 8; 7:3; 8:5; Ps. 45:3; 84:12; Prov. 1:9; 3:4, 22, 34; 4:9; 5:19; 11:16; 13:15; 17:8; 22:1, 11; 28:23; 31:30; Eccl. 9:11; 10:12; Jer. 31:2; Nah. 3:4; Zech. 4:7; 6:14; 12:10.

⁶ Rom. 1:11; 5:15f; 6:23; 11:29; 12:6; 1 Co. 1:7; 7:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30f; 2 Co. 1:11; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:10.

We have different gifts (Gk. charisma), according to the grace (Gk. charis) given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. (NIV Romans 12:6)

Now there are varieties of gifts (Gk. charisma), but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone... ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts (Gk. charisma) of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts (Gk. charisma). (ESV 1 Corinthians 12:4-31)

As each has received a gift (Gk. charisma), use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace (Gk. charis): ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies- in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. (ESV 1 Peter 4:10-11)

4. Grace is thus simply *divine favor and power* given by God, the supreme Ruler over creation, in this age and the age to come—overcoming Satan, sin and death in the age to come and preserving the saints through forgiveness, cleansing and strengthening in this age, giving them power to faithfully walk out their calling.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge- ⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you- ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift (Gk. charisma), as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (ESV 1 Corinthians 1:4-8)

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift (Gk. charisma) of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control (as in the age to come). ⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God... ¹² which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. (ESV 2 Timothy 1:5-12)

- C. The grace of God is given in context to the Day of the Lord and the coming Kingdom. Grace is unto strengthening the church in her identity and purpose in this age (cf. worship, discipleship and evangelism), and thus grace is the primary “commodity” sought by the saints in this age.

1. Worship/Faith

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. (NIV Romans 5:1-2)

There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called... ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it... ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (NIV Ephesians 4:4-13)

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (NIV Hebrews 4:14-16)

2. Discipleship/Sanctification

Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (NIV Acts 20:32)

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (NIV 2 Corinthians 12:8-9)

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope-- the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. (NIV Titus 2:11-13)

3. Evangelism/Proclamation

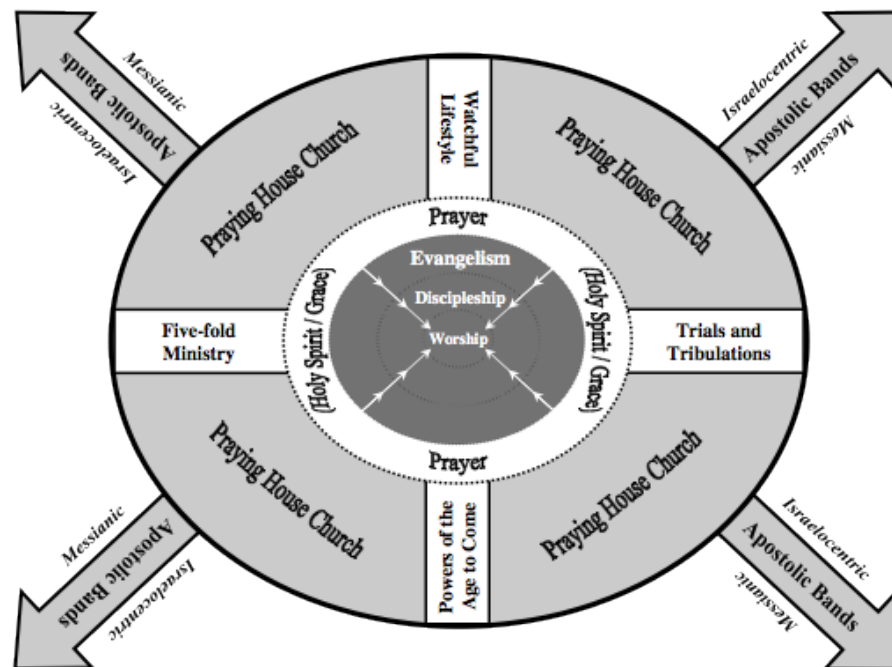
With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. (NIV Acts 4:33)

Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. (NIV Romans 1:5)

I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles... (NIV Romans 15:15-16)

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-- yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. (NIV 1 Corinthians 15:10)

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, ¹⁶ was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone... (ESV Galatians 1:15-16)

Missiological Praxis Diagram

- D. This then is the context for all of the “apostolic prayers,” i.e. prayers prayed in the Bible by the apostles. The apostles knew their utter dependence upon God, and thus they prayed diligently for the grace of God to rest on the community of faith.⁷

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹ Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, ¹¹ as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor (Gk. charisma) granted us in answer to the prayers of many. (NIV 2 Corinthians 1:8-11)

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand... (ESV Ephesians 1:16-20)

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure

⁷ All prayers thus essentially go something like this: “God, give us grace to walk worthy of our calling (understanding our faith, sanctifying ourselves, sharing the gospel boldly), that we might receive a rich welcome into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus.”

and blameless until the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-- to the glory and praise of God. (NIV Philippians 1:9-11)

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. ¹¹ May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. (ESV Colossians 1:9-12)

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father... ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith- that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (ESV Ephesians 3:14-19)

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement (cf. "hope" v.4) give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... ¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (NIV Romans 15:5-13)

Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. ¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹² May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. (NIV 1 Thessalonians 3:10-13)

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at ("unto" KJV) the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. ²⁵ Brothers, pray for us. (ESV 1 Thessalonians 5:23-25)

With this in mind (cf. v.6-10), we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy ("make you worthy" ESV/NRSV/NLT) of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. ¹² We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12)

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. ^{3:1} Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. ²

And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith... ⁵ May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance. (NIV 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5)

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. (NIV Colossians 4:2-4)

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. (NIV Ephesians 6:18-20)

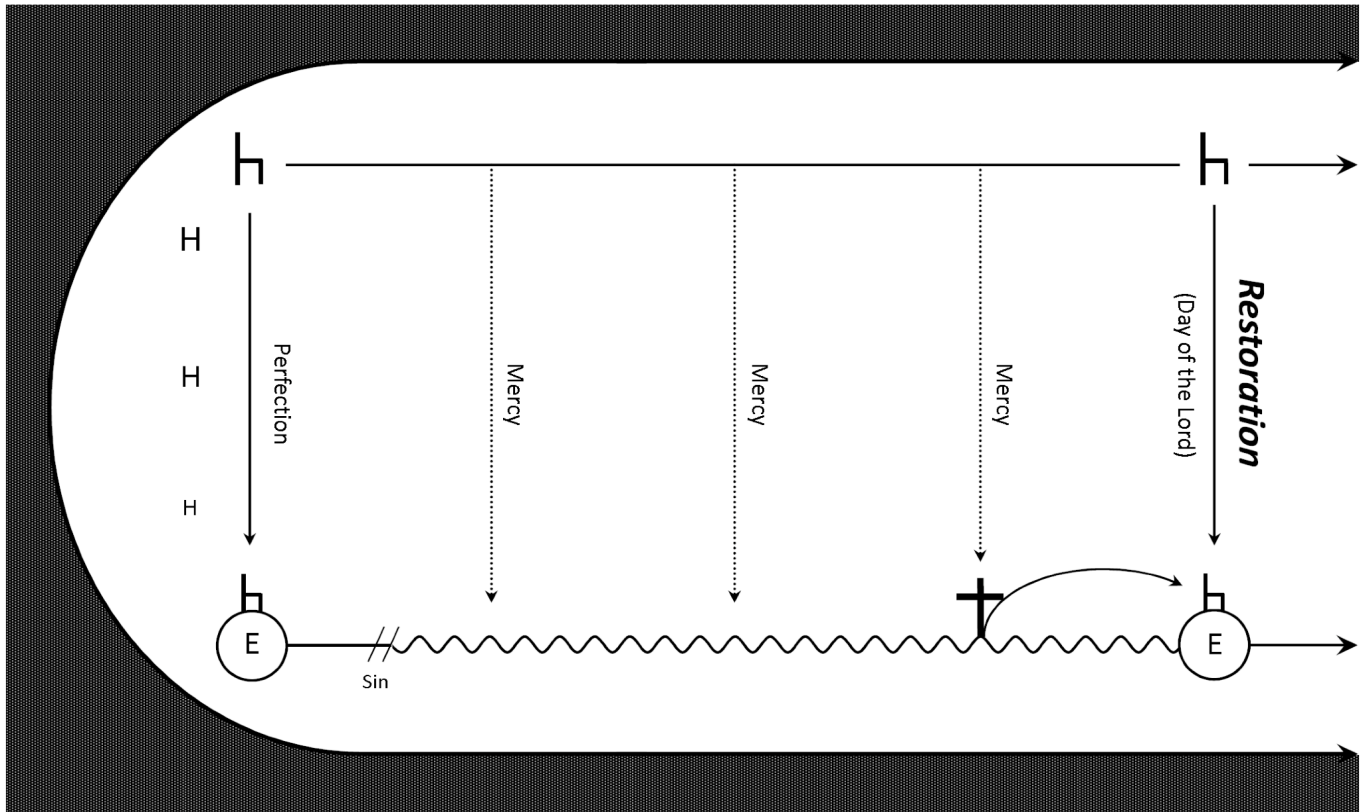
When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them..."²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." (NIV Acts 4:24-30)

II. GRACE ACCESSED THROUGH PRAYER

- A. Grace is given by God for the perseverance of the Assembly and the fulfillment of its purpose and function. However, this grace is *only received by prayer*. Thus, prayer is the means of accessing grace unto faithfulness and perseverance in our calling.⁸

When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. ³ Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴ Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us..."⁵ Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread (cf. Holy Spirit/grace)... ⁹ So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you... ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (NIV Luke 11:2-13)

⁸ This is essentially an assertion by omission, since nowhere is it directly stated in the Scriptures, though obviously *directly implied* often. However, conversely, nowhere is it stated that anything else is a means to receiving the Holy Spirit, grace, and power.



So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you (cf. prayer)... ¹¹ Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! (NIV Luke 11:9-13)

Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised (cf. prayer, v.14), which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit... ⁸ you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (NIV Acts 1:4-8)

When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God... ²⁹ "Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness..." ³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. (NIV Acts 4:24-30)

On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, ¹¹ as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor (Gk. charisma) granted us in answer to the prayers of many. (NIV 2 Corinthians 1:8-11)

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence (cf. prayer), so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (NIV Hebrews 4:14-16)

You do not have, because you do not ask (cf. prayer). ³ ***You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions*** (vs. things pertaining to the Church's calling). ⁴ ***You adulterous people! ...*** ⁵ ***do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?*** ⁶ ***But he gives more grace*** (if we ask). ***Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*** (ESV James 4:2-6)

- B. Many traditions have assumed things other than prayer, e.g. "sacraments," to be means of grace, thus *diminishing the practical necessity* of the Church to organize itself around prayer, both individually and corporately.⁹

*Means of Grace — an expression not used in Scripture, but employed (1) to denote those institutions ordained by God to be the ordinary channels of grace to the souls of men. These are the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer. (2) But in popular language the expression is used in a wider sense to denote those exercises in which we engage for the purpose of obtaining spiritual blessing; as hearing the gospel, reading the Word, meditation, self-examination, Christian conversation, etc.*¹⁰

*The phrase is intended to indicate those institutions which God has ordained to be the ordinary channels of grace, i.e., of the supernatural influences of the Holy Spirit, to the souls of men. The means of grace, according to the standards of our Church, are the word, sacraments, and prayer.*¹¹

- C. The necessity of prayer is also in proportion to the necessity of grace, which is determined by the magnitude of the calling, which in turn is determined by the end of that calling, i.e. salvation and eschatology.

John Wesley's "The Means of Grace" doc can be downloaded [under this session](#) as well.

1. Within a Christonaturalistic context, "heaven" is our destiny and the ultimate end of salvation. Thus, grace is simply seen as the means of continued forgiveness unto entrance into heaven at death (or the Second Coming, whichever comes first).
2. The only reason for prayer is to access forgiveness when sin has occurred. Thus, the modern church generally meets weekly, the time agreed upon to keep forgiveness current. Christonaturalism has thus led to a severe distortion in the *theology of grace*, producing a variety of forgiveness based ideologies with "once saved, always saved" at the far end of the spectrum (assuming zero need for prayer, grace and perseverance).

⁹ The Catholic Church has historically held to the Seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Last Rites, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. The Protestant Reformation rejected all but Baptism and Communion. Traditionally the Catholic Church defined sacraments as "An outward sign of inward grace, a sacred and mysterious sign or ceremony, ordained by Christ, by which grace is conveyed to our souls." (Catholic Encyclopedia, "The Sacraments"; available at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13295a.htm>.) This definition has generally prevailed within Protestantism as well and is reflected in most modern definitions, e.g., "A formal religious ceremony *conferring a specific grace* on those who receive it; the two Protestant ceremonies are baptism and the Lord's Supper; in the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church there are seven traditional rites accepted as instituted by Jesus: baptism and confirmation and Holy Eucharist and penance and holy orders and matrimony and extreme unction." [HyperDictionary.com, "Sacrament," in WordNet® 3.0 (Princeton University, 2006); italics mine; available from <http://www.hyperdictionary.com/search.aspx?define=sacrament>.]

¹⁰ M.G. Easton (c1897), *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1996).

¹¹ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 3:465.

3. However, if the Church's calling is unto a real Kingdom with a real government with a real system of rewards and punishments, then *much grace* is needed (and thus *much prayer*)—not only for forgiveness, but for faithfulness and perseverance unto the fullness of our inheritance and the fullness of proclamation to the world.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ ***And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,*** ²⁵ ***not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*** (^{ESV} Hebrews 10:23-25)

The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. ⁴² ***So will it be with the resurrection of the dead.*** (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 15:41-42)

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ ***and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead...*** ¹³ ***Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead*** (by grace through prayer), ¹⁴ ***I press on toward the goal to win the prize*** (i.e. full inheritance) ***for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*** (^{NIV} Philippians 3:10-14)

- D. Prayer thus becomes the central feature of the Assembly, as we work out our calling and election with fear and trembling.

Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ ***But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch*** (cf. prayer) ***and would not have let his house be broken into*** (cf. grace for righteousness). ⁴⁴ ***So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*** (^{NIV} Matthew 24:42-44)

Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. ³⁵ ***For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.*** ³⁶ ***Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.*** (^{NIV} Luke 21:34-36)

The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. ⁸ ***Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.*** ⁹ ***Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.*** ¹⁰ ***As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:*** ¹¹ ***whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies- in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever.*** ***Amen*** (Doxological Response; cf. Mt. 6:13; Rom. 11:36; 16:27; Eph. 3:21; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16; 1 Pe. 5:11; 2 Pe. 3:18; Jud. 1:25; Rev. 1:5f; 5:12ff). (^{ESV} 1 Peter 4:7-11)

- *When the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory... ⁸ **Be sober-minded; be watchful.** Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, **the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.** ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (^{ESV} 1 Peter 5:4-11)*
- *But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. ¹⁴ So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, **make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.** ¹⁵ Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him... ¹⁷ Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, **be on your guard** so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. ¹⁸ **But grow in the grace and knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever ("to the day of eternity" NASB/ESV/NRSV)! Amen. (^{NIV} 2 Peter 3:13-18)*