

LENT DEVOTION

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For a righteous person, a believer, Jesus Christ is also the wisdom from God (that is, "our righteousness, holiness, and redemption"). "You are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us "wisdom from God" -- that is, "our righteousness, holiness, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30). Wisdom by definition of the Hebrew root word "ohkma" is the "skill for living." Righteousness, holiness, and redemption are provided by God to a believer in order for him/her to live a "skillful living." These three are provided for a believer with both "life in the future" (eternity) and "this life" (here on earth) in mind.

The word "holy" means "separated" – separated from the values and standards of the evil world. God expects us, as His children, to live a holy life because we are being conformed to the image of Christ and that without holiness it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 12:10). The word 'redeem' has to do with 'paying the penalty' to buy back. God paid the penalty for our sins through the death of His Son Jesus Christ. We have been redeemed by His blood when "Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself to be a people that are his very own, eager to do good" (Titus 2:14). Friends, this verse reminds us that the work of salvation involves the triple work of redeeming us from guilt-judgment and also of producing moral purity and using us for helpful service to others.

A believer who is righteous has that wisdom from God to know that he has been redeemed and belongs to the Holy One. Also, he/she balances the life around righteousness, holiness and grows in them day by day. The degree of growth in 'ethical/moral purity' may be measured only in the context of the relationship with others - in helping, serving, and relating with others. People can see the difference and degree of growth as God also can. But of course, people around us are not the 'standard' but "God is" the standard of righteousness and holiness.

A human being does not have the ability to balance his/her life but needs wisdom from God. Human wisdom is sometimes deceptive and other times incomplete. It will be like that of Eve who on her own and with the deception of the Devil "saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took it and ate it" (Genesis 3:6) and thus brought sin, death, evil, and wickedness. Human wisdom has the potential to lead one to unrighteousness and unholiness. Whereas "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom from God." For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength" (1 Corinthians 1:25). A believer needs the help of the Spirit of God in the growth of wisdom from God. So he/she keeps on "asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give the Spirit of Wisdom and revelation, so that a believer know Him better" and also prays that the "eyes of the heart may be enlightened in order that the believer may know the hope to which He has called - the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:17--18).