

3 June 2012

Abundance of God's Goodness (Abound Pt 2)

Today is part two of our teaching on the word *abound* in the Holy Scriptures. There are 19 occurrences of the word *abound*, 5 of *abounded*, 3 of *aboundeth* and three of *abounding*. According to the English Oxford dictionary the word *abound* means "overflow, either of vessel or of liquid. Be plentiful; be rich; team or infested with." In short the word *abound*, means to exist in abundance, hence this study will include the word *abundance*, of which there are 68 occurrences in the Holy Scriptures.

In our previous teaching we covered 3 points which included:-

1. The heathen *abounds* in sin
2. The law shows sin to *abound*
3. God's grace *abounds* through Jesus Christ much more than sin *abounded*

In this study we will cover three (3) additional points and continue to look at those things which our God *abounds* in, and we also consider the word abundance:-

1. God *abounds* in forgiveness
2. God *abounds* in goodness and truth
3. God *abounds* to us in all wisdom and prudence

Let us add a little more detail to each of our points:-

1. God *abounds* in forgiveness

Is.55: 7 *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Our verse in Isaiah says, God will abundantly pardon and from this I have asserted that He *abounds* in forgiveness, a doctrine that follows closely alongside our last point in our previous teaching, that claimed God's grace *abounds* through Jesus Christ much more than sin *abounded*. I have used the word forgiveness, because our verse uses the word pardon, which means forgiveness. We note that the word *pardon* only occurs in the Old Testament and means forgiveness or absolution, a word used more by Roman Catholics than Protestants. Among the many differences between the church of Rome, and the church that believes the Holy Scriptures, is the doctrine of Penance, which includes the Priest's ability to absolve a person of their sins.

We all know the doctrine of forgiving our brethren when we sin against our him, the Lord teaches us to forgive each other 70 x 7 (see Matt.18: 22), that is 490 times, but the doctrine of Penance is does not refer to forgiving a brother when he

wrongs another. The online Catholic Encyclopedia writes, "Absolution proper is that act of the priest whereby, in the Sacrament of Penance, he frees man from sin...That there is in the Church power to absolve sins committed after baptism the Council of Trent thus declares" (see <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01061a.htm>). Note its wording; "that act of the priest whereby...he frees man from sin." That's right, according to the church of Rome, one man frees another man from his sins and so Christ's work on the cross is nullified by the traditions and teachings of the RC church. But, according to the Holy Scriptures we learn that it is only through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's one off, sinless lamb and belief in His death on the cross that any man can be forgiven, can be pardoned (for it is only by the shedding of blood that there is remission or forgiveness of sins - Heb.9: 22). And because all have sinned, that means all the RC priests have broken God's law, and they can NEVER make a person free from their sins, only the sinless lamb of God can do that! Forgiveness of a man's sin is a work of God and not of man, but rather for man it is impossible for him to free another man from sin, whereas by the risen Lord we are made free from sin (see Rom.6: 18) are imputed with His righteousness (see Rom.4: 22-24).

But we know from the Scriptures that God, in all His abundance of grace (see Rom.5: 15, 20, 2Cor.9: 8 and 1Tim.1: 14), in all His abundance of mercy (as seen in our verse Is.55: 7 & 1Pet.1: 3), hath given us His Only Begotten Son, hath given us the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of world (see Jn.1: 29). And in Christ Jesus, God's forgiveness *abounds*, through His blood we are washed clean of our sins (see Rev.1: 5).

Hence every believer, has an assurance that their sin is washed clean, their iniquity is pardoned, because God is abundant, He *abounds* in forgiveness and if it is God that cleanses him, and not another man, then every sin will be washed away! We can have an assurance of that truth, when we believe the gospel of Christ crucified, when we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ bore ALL of our sin on Himself at Calvary. But how many Christians do you know who are concerned about the judgment seat of Christ, or are concerned that the Lord will say, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (see Matt.7: 23)? I remember when Karen and I were at the Bible College of New Zealand, visiting a fellow student's church study group and someone asked; after death, how could he be sure that he would not hear the words of Matt.7: 23? What assuredness does anyone have, that after they believed on Christ and gone to judgment following death, would not hear the words from the Lord; "depart from me". No one in the room could answer the question, and the question troubled me for some time. I look back now and ask myself; was the man saved, did he believe the gospel of Christ crucified, and if he did, had he believed it in vain? Because, as we have seen, if he did believe that his sins were on the Saviour, that he was washed in His blood, then he would know,

that once saved always saved because from the moment a person believes the gospel of Christ crucified, they are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise(see Eph. 1: 13).

Let us encourage each other and remind each other that God *abounds* in forgiveness and when we experience His forgiveness through Christ, we are saved until the day of redemption.

2. God *abounds* in goodness and truth

Ex 34:6 *And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,*
See also Rom 3:7

God *abounds* in goodness and truth. David proclaimed that God's goodness was great (see Ps.31: 19) and that the goodness of God endureth continually (see Ps.52: 1). Likewise the apostle Paul proclaimed to the church the riches of God's goodness (see Rom.2: 4) and that such abundance of goodness, leads a man to repentance (see also Rom.2: 4). We know that the Holy Spirit of God convicts men of sin and of judgment (see Jn.16: 8) and we now know that the abundance of the Lord's goodness motivates a man to repentance.

Have you ever struggled to say I am sorry to someone? Perhaps you fear their retribution that historically follows your confession? But with God, when we confess our sin and repent of our iniquities, His goodness moves Him to forgive those who come in true repentance, just as His goodness leads a man to repentance.

Not only does God *abound* in goodness, but He also *abounds* in truth. And as we know, when a person gets saved by believing the gospel of Christ crucified, they receive the Holy Spirit of God, which is said to be the spirit of truth (see 1Jn.4: 6). And just as an apple tree bears apples as its fruit, so does a person who is born of the Spirit of God, bear fruit of the Spirit of God. And the Bible says that the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. The Holy Spirit of God bears the fruit of the *Spirit in* all abundance of goodness and truth in a believer. Now add to this, that the fruit of the Spirit *includes* goodness we begin to get an idea of the magnitude of God's abundant goodness, that He show us, but *He* also gives us as fruit of His Holy Spirit. When we show others something of God's abundant goodness, we are bearing fruit of His Holy Spirit and so don't expect to show such abundant goodness in your own strength. And the same goes for truth; don't expect to be shown God's truth and its abundance if you don't walk in the Spirit. For the Spirit of God is given in all goodness and truth, and the same Holy

Spirit is known as the Spirit of truth (see Jn.14: 17, 15: 26 & 16: 13), and is truth (see 1Jn.5: 6).

Have you ever come across a believer that struggles with the truth of the Authorized Bible?

I remember the chap that brother Matt had working for him, he was a professed believer, and like many who go to a traditional church, struggled with the concept of God preserving His revelation in the Authorized Bible. It just did not click, where as others once they hear and see that their counterfeit bible has errors in it, they realize that “it” can not be “the Bible”, because the Bible is the word of God and word of God is truth (see Jn.17: 17). And we also know that there is NO error in truth, and there is a difference between error and truth (see 1Jn.4: 6).

So if, when you come across a person that professes to be a believer, a person saved by believing the gospel of Christ crucified, and they do not want to know about truth, then share with them some of God’s abundant mercy, His abundant goodness and give them space to read the Scriptures, and see from the words of truth, that error can not co-exist with truth. Just as a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (see 1Cor.5: 6 & Gal.5: 9). The Holy Scriptures, that reveal God’s abundant truth and goodness, and are known as the words of truth, CANNOT contain error. Let us ask God for His wisdom, His charity, His longsuffering, His mercy, His goodness to show those who struggle with this truth, that the body of Christ would be glorified, and in doing so, that we would exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, to His praise and honour! And let us remember that God *abounds* in all goodness and truth.

3. God *abounds* to us in all wisdom and prudence to us in Christ.

Eph 1:8 Wherein he hath *abounded* toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Our verse does not say that God *abounds* to us in all wisdom and prudence, but rather that He *abounds* toward us all wisdom and prudence and when we read this verse in context we establish that ‘he’ is God. Therefore, I have made an application from our verse, that God *abounds* in wisdom and prudence towards us in Christ.

According to the Oxford on-line dictionary the word prudent means “acting or showing care and thought for the future”, and we see something of this meaning in the Scriptures (see Prov.27: 12 A prudent man foreseeth the evil). And we know that; the beginning of wisdom is to fear the Lord (see Pro.9: 10) and that the Lord gives man wisdom, as he did Solomon (see 1Kgs. 4: 29), and He promises wisdom to anyone who asks for it (see Jam.1: 5 & Eph.1: 17). And he can do so, because of His goodness and because He Himself *abounds* in wisdom and prudence. And he

will give us His wisdom to do His work, that the work may glorify His name. After all, how can the work glorify God, if it is done in our wisdom, whether that be preaching, teaching or any other such thing. If the work is of God and He has ordained the work, then the believer does that work out of the abundance of God's wisdom and not his own.

God's wisdom can not be learnt from a text book, you can not learn it by doing a degree in anthropology or science, but rather is given to a believer when he asks for it, and we learn of His great wisdom when we read the Holy Scriptures. And so, a believer will ALWAYS be wiser than the wisest scientist, mathematician, or computer programmer, because the BEGINNING of wisdom is to fear God. So if a scientist with 5 PHDs after his name appears wise to you, but rejects the Lord Jesus Christ, then just remember he is not wise in the eyes of God, he is a fool (for a fool sayeth in his heart there is no God - see Ps.3: 1). So who do you believe, the scientist who writes the text books or the Lord God, who through the His Holy Spirit penned the Holy Scriptures?

Do you know any scientist that abounds in wisdom? I don't, because their science, which is falsely so called (see 1Tim.6: 20) continues to evolve and continues to develop theories based on current knowledge. Which, when it denies God, is foolishness in His sight!

Let us remember that man cannot find or know God by his own wisdom (see 1Cor. 1: 21), and the only means for which man can be saved is by believing the gospel, which the bible says is foolishness to man, as it is by the foolishness of preaching that man gets saved (see 1Cor.1: 21)! Because the foolishness of God is wiser than man (see 1Cor.1: 23). Paul, reminds us that he comes not to preach the gospel in the wisdom of man (see 1Cor.1: 17), "lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." So how does a worldly, wise man get saved? How does someone who thinks he is wise in the world get saved?

What is impossible with man, is possible with God, as we read of the rich man in Lk.18: 27!

You can debate with the wise of this world, you can reason with the wise of this world, but they will not know God, through their wisdom. The lost will only know God hearing and believing the gospel, and by the Holy Spirit of God convicting them of their sin, in righteousness and in judgement (Jn.16: 8).

You try having a discussion, or debate with an unsaved man who thinks he is wise in the eyes of the world. You will come away frustrated as I did when I sought to persuade a lawyer of his need for the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be encouraged not to get entangled in their discussion, let us not get drawn in to answering their questions (see 2Tim.2: 23), but ensure that before the discussion is ended that they hear the glorious gospel of the grace of God, the gospel of Christ crucified. For it is only when the gospel is preached, and they fear God and believe the Lord Jesus

Christ, that they will begin to know the abundance of His wisdom. Let us remember that God says, he will destroy the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent (see 1Cor.1: 19).

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ *abounds* in ALL wisdom and prudence and hence He gives wisdom to those who believe and ask Him for it. But if you ask Him, who *abounds* in wisdom, for wisdom to steal, then it is unlikely that He will give it to you. So when you ask, make sure you do so in the knowledge that you are doing His will, just as Solomon did (see 2Chron.1: 11), and he was the wisest man in all the world, during his time and ever will be, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ in whom God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification and redemption (see 1Cor.1: 30). Today, for the church age, perhaps as we see the love of God only in Christ Jesus (see Rom.8: 39), so we only have access to the wealth, to the abundance of God's wisdom and prudence, in the Lord Jesus Christ! For in Him are hid all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge (see Col.2: 3), which is exactly what we see from our verse in Eph.1: 8. If you need wisdom today, if you need to make prudent decisions about the future, then ask the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and He will liberally give to all men who ask. And He does so from His wisdom and prudence that *abounds*.

Having said what we have said, let us say it again. In this our second teaching on the word *abound*, we have covered 3 points which include:-

1. God *abounds* in forgiveness
2. God *abounds* in goodness and truth
3. God *abounds* to us in all wisdom and prudence