

Holy Autocorrect
Ephesians 1:15-23
May 17, 2015 SOH

Theme: Following the Holy Spirit

I learned to use a typewriter very early in life primarily because dad was an office machine technician and we always had a couple of typewriters around. Oh, I didn't really learn how to touch type until high school, but dad tried to teach me. Most of what I typed had lots of mistakes and you could see every one of them. Each time you turned the knob so you could erase the mistake you'd also rub off some of the paper and you could never quite get all the ink off anyway so there was a smudge around every correction. The invention of white-out didn't help much either because the white liquid never quite matched the paper and when you didn't wait long enough to type over, well, an erased smudge was preferable.

In the summer I'd sometimes go on business trips with dad out to the schools in rural northern Arizona. One of my job was using compressed air from a tank in the back of the van to blow out the mountains of eraser dust inside the typewriters.

When you made a mistake on a typewriter, everyone who saw your document knew you made a mistake. I learned to admire secretaries and

administrative assistants who could type a business letter and not make a mistake.

Along came computers and except for the problem of really bad printers, you could correct a letter and make it look perfect, the mistakes simply disappeared with the backspace key. Unfortunately, personal computers came along after I had completed the hundreds of papers required for a college degree.

One of my hero's is Dean Hachamovich. You've probably never heard of him, but if you use a word processor, send a text on your phone, or send an email you owe a tip of the hat to Dean. Way back in the 1990's Dean went to work for Microsoft on the Word team as the company began to further develop their word processing program.

Dean developed a computer routine that could actually detect commonly misspelled words like 'teh' instead of 'the' and as soon as you press the space bar, like magic, the misspelled word is corrected. Halleluia! For a chronically fumble-fingered typist, it's a gift as sweet as ice cream and rich as dark chocolate. Finally, even though I know how to spell 'the' my fingers refuse to type the correct order of letters about 20% of the time but now I don't have to slow down my typing or thinking in order to correct the problem. Dean's program continues to grow and be refined so future typists will benefit.

Auto correct is a great thing even if it causes some of my text messages to say the wrong thing from time to time when I don't read them carefully before pressing the send button. Sometimes my "Meet you at Paradise Bakery," might instead read, "Meet you at Pravda Books." I think Keith is compiling a list of my mis-proofed text messages to insure I buy lunch regularly.

While autocorrect is a result of modern technology, could it be that this is something like Paul had in mind as he penned this letter to the Ephesian church? The heart of the Ephesians text today is in verses 17-19;

"I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power."

Paul prays that God would give the Ephesian followers of Christ a gift of the Holy Spirit; wisdom as they "come to know him." Two things, first that Paul understands the Holy Spirit is the source of special

gifts from God in this case, wisdom and revelation. Secondly that Paul understands you can come to "know God." God is approachable, knowable, and a giver of good gifts. These are critical and essential characteristics of the God that we are learning to be disciples for that you need to understand.

Why does Paul ask God for these gifts? Notice what he writes about the Holy Spirit: he can help us. In this case he can help us;

1. Know what the hope is God is calling you for. Eternal life, sharing God's grace, and following Jesus in service and love.
2. Know the riches of our inheritance as believers. No matter what your family is like or perhaps even lack of a family, as a follower of Jesus, you have been adopted into God's family and you will share in the kingdom of God.
3. Know the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe. When you accept God's grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ and his work on the cross, you are given an incredible gift – the presence, power, and work of God through his Spirit IN you. God becomes a part of you and the power of God becomes available to you.

Three lofty results of receiving the power of the Holy Spirit; “knowledge” and so Paul, wisely, prays for the gift of wisdom for his friends who are new to the faith. However, eyes of our hearts are still focused on the ways of the world and we need to learn to allow the Spirit to autocorrect our vision. With God’s continued presence we begin to see others as God sees them. It’s like auto correction learning the words I commonly mistype so it can correct them. We think and see one way, but the Holy Spirit changes our vision of the world.

What one day we saw as an ugly or repulsive human, we discover is actually a beloved child of God made in his image and anything made in God’s image, by definition, is beautiful. The work or service we one day thought was beneath us, not worthy of our time and energy becomes an act of praise and thanksgiving to God as we perform it.

Brother Lawrence, a 17th century French monk, worked in the lowest jobs in the monastery, usually in the kitchen. Because his life of service and his joy affected so many he wrote about why he served and he said this, “We can do little things for God; I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of him, and that done, if there is nothing else to call me, I prostrate myself in worship before him, who has given me grace to work; afterwards I rise happier than a king. It is

enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God.”

That is autocorrect fully functional in human form driven by the Holy Spirit. What we see and what God sees are often contradictions. We see struggles; a lost job, a failed marriage, a wayward child, death of a child, a debilitating illness, or the daily stress of coping in a fallen world. God sees opportunities for renewed faith, a different path to be lived out, or an opportunity to share the strength of God with another struggling soul.

Consider the auto correction the Psalm writer received in Psalm 42:

*Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God. (Psalm 42:11)*

We can only guess what the writer was experiencing in life yet his response reflects God’s presence in him; “Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.” I pray that no matter what you are experiencing right now God will give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation that you may see beyond what is in front of you and point you again to God’s presence which, in turn, may guide you into tomorrow.