What would Jesus want to give you that you need more than anything else?

Jesus had just told His disciples something about His own near future that *“they did not understand.”* Jesus did not want anyone to find out where He and His disciples were while He taught them about the things to come that they needed to know, and especially about what was going to happen to Him in a short time. Throughout the gospels we see Jesus taking His disciples off to a quiet private place, away from the crowds and commotion, to talk intimately with them and to tell them about the things to come in both the near and distant future.

As I have been reading through the gospels this is what has really spoken to me, and from it I have concluded that our Lord does not want any of us, especially His closest followers, to be *ignorant*. That is the state of the ungodly, not the godly.

Ignorance: to lack the knowledge of God; to reject the teaching of Jesus Christ; to have no true understanding or clear vision of the future from God.

Just think about that; think about how privileged we are as His chosen ones to have the One who created all things and holds the future in Himself, that He would want to spend time with each of us so that we would not be clueless, unprepared and at a huge loss. This “loss” is far more than we realize.

In answering the question from Peter, James, John and Andrew (Mark 13: 4) about how to know the time of the Lord’s return, Jesus answered: *“Watch out that no deceives you,”* and then He goes into all the signs that take place in the heavens and on the earth that will precede His return. He ends it with, *“So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.* (Mark13:23)…..*What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”* (Mark 13:37)

“Be on your guard” is not a suggestion; it is a command. In disobeying His commands, we will suffer great loss. The desire of our Lord is that we prosper in every way so that we can be helpful, useful to Him. Just think about that. He has done everything to not only make sure we know what is ahead and most certainly is coming into our lives and the lives of our children, but He has set us up to prosper. Think about that; how wonderful He is in working all around us so that we do not have to be afraid and forfeit His amazing grace.

What wonderful gifts He gives us! What a gift He has given us in the Holy Spirit who shows us these wonders and gives us the excitement and confidence to take hold of what our Lord has done to make sure we prosper in every way! But, the gift we need most from Him is the gift of knowledge and understanding; for without it we will not see or take advantage of the opportunities to prosper that are set up for us.

The disciples did not understand and to add to that ignorance, they were too afraid to ask the Lord for the understanding they lacked. Do you do the same? What hinders us from calling on the Lord for the understanding we lack? I like the way James puts it:

*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete,* ***not lacking anything****. If any of you lacks wisdom (understanding and insight), he should ask God, who* ***gives generously*** *to all without finding fault, and* ***it will be given to him****. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.”* James 1:2-8

I see three good reasons why we don’t call on the Lord for understanding or knowledge. We lack confidence that He would actually speak to us, so that we know we have heard from Him directly. We are afraid of His answer. We don’t want to hear from Him.

To doubt the understanding the Lord gives; that is, to not put it to work in your life, is to remain immature and incomplete. This is not the will of God for His people. Knowledge, wisdom and opportunity are 3 blessings that are ours in Christ – just for the taking and then for the using.

Christians who do not want to know what they need to know are the very ones that will be afraid and at a loss when persecution and disaster personally hits them.

The Lord prepared His disciples with both the knowledge about the things to come, and promises that in every situation at any time – they would have all they need to flourish for the increase and glory of His kingdom. He not only went to prepare a place for them in Heaven, but He has set up for us all the advantages we need on earth to do all the will of God; to do all the wonderful works Jesus said would be done on the earth through His Church, generation after generation.

Our God is an awesome God that prepares a good future for His children, on earth and in heaven. Let us not forget what Jesus said that as it is in Heaven – it shall also be on the earth. Now we see it “in part,” but the Day is soon here when we will see it “in its fullness!” Hallelujah to the Lamb and King of Glory!

Jesus was very on-guard about His surroundings so to prevent any distraction while He taught His disciples and disclosed the future to them. To me, this reveals the great importance it is to understand what is going to happen so that we won’t be caught unaware and do things or say things out of our ignorant pride or fear, and to be able to pray according to God’s will, and not our will, so that we come into agreement with God and see the true power in prayer.

Peter learned wisdom from the things he suffered *out of ignorance* (lack of understanding), such as when he used his sword to cut off the soldier’s ear when they came to arrest our Lord. Jesus rebuked him for it and said,

*“Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the* ***Scriptures be fulfilled*** *that say it must happen in this way?”* Matthew26:52-54

Not only was it written, but Jesus had just reminded His disciples at the supper table previously that it must happen for all their sake. How much of our praying and even our work is meaningless and unworthy because we lack wisdom, knowledge and understanding? It’s not God’s fault that my prayer/prayers are not answered and my requests granted; it’s mine – for not understanding the time I live in, and not knowing what I should know from out of God’s Book; for not seeing what God requires of me first.

Here in Mark 9:30-32 we are told that while they did not understand, they were too afraid to ask Him about it. This puzzles me. Why were they afraid to ask? Were they afraid of another rebuke about their unbelief and lack of faith? Were they afraid to appear before one another dull-minded? Why were they so afraid to ask the One who had won their hearts and called them all to His side and purpose - what He meant by what He said? Have you ever felt like that? Have you ever been reading God’s Word and failed to ask Him about a passage or a phrase that seemed to speak to you and at the same time mystified you, or brought question? Did you just move on and not meditate and wait for His voice to give you the understanding you need? Are we not willing to give our time to the Lord as we wait on Him?

I love this about my Lord; that He does not want us to be ignorant, afraid, lacking and unprepared; that He does not want us to have one regret at the end of our life on earth. He cares more than we care – about our future honor, rewards and crown.

*“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”* (John 14:15-18)

*“I have much more to say to you,* ***more than you can now bear****. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”* John 16:12-15

Jesus could’ve told them much more, but He knew they would not be able to understand how to accept it and use it and live it out yet – until they had His Holy Spirit in them. The “deposit” of the Holy Spirit in us is a great responsibility as well as a great gift. I don’t think we modern-day disciples really know what we possess with such an awesome gift from God! If we really understood all we have with God’s indwelling Spirit; the power, the unity and the favor of God, how would this world be different? How would our marriage and family be different? Yet, as the Lord says to His people: *“I know your deeds, and that you have little strength, yet you have kept My Word and not denied My Name. Therefore, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut.”* (Revelation 3:7-8) The Lord is not holding our physical weaknesses against us! But, He will hold against us our denying Him and neglecting to know His Word.

We have seen how Peter did the wrong thing at the time of the Lord’s arrest. Peter was not ready for the moment when that prophecy would be fulfilled and He did the wrong thing. After the Lord had left them behind as He went up to pray to His Father, telling them to “keep watch,” he returned to His disciples to find them sleeping. *“Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?”* He said to Peter, *“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”* (Matthew 26:40-41) Three times He returned to find them asleep at their post. He said to them*, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near….”* (Matthew 26:45)

Are you unwilling to give up an hour of sleep, or even 15 minutes of sleep to get with your Father in prayer each morning before you start your day? Is it really “your” day when our breath, our life, our remaining time all comes from God? Is it all ours to do with as we please; as our sin nature pleases?

For them in that day, the “hour” they were to be ready for was the Lord’s arrest, death and resurrection. For us, it is to be prepared for what He said would happen to us as His Day of return approaches – just like He promised. As the first disciples saw Him leave, His last disciples will see Him return; in the clouds! Are we aware of how near that hour is, ready and prepared? Or, are we still doing what we’ve always done thinking it won’t happen in our lifetime, or our children’s lifetime?

Our “quiet-time” with the Lord, His ‘private and personal’ teaching and fellowship with each of us, is more important than we think. Jesus taught that the closer we get to His return – the more “apostasy” there will be with His church; far more believers falling away from Him than there are finishing with Him. So, be on guard that you are not among those who fall away from the Lord Jesus Christ because of all the things happening to you in your lifetime. Guard your heart for Him; guard it more than you protect and secure anything else. Your children’s future depends on it! The next generation of the faithful depends on you remaining faithful to the Lord.

Going to church to hear the Word of God is not going to cut it when real persecution hits. Church buildings will come down, along with church positions and paychecks. Private home group Bible studies will increase but also sought out to be stopped. It’s happening all over the world, but all the more in the coming days as the devil prepares for his finale: ruling the whole world through a man.

What you have “in you” by the Word and Spirit of God is secured in Heaven with God, awaiting you. No one or no thing can touch or take it from you. Wow! What a gift we have been given in the Holy Spirit! What confidence and power we have from God’s Word, knowing the truth and will of our Father, knowing what is to come and what God has prepared for those who love Him!

Jesus enjoyed personal quite time with His disciples by initiating it whenever He knew they needed to understand something about Himself or about their future. He does the same thing today with each of us, but how many of us take the time to be with Him in this persona and private way? In so many ways the first disciples found it hard to be separated from Him, even for a day. Even when they didn’t fully understand His teaching, they still wanted to be near Him because of His love for them that was irresistible and binding. Jesus understood their weakness and ignorance, and He didn’t hold it against them. Instead, He gave them promises to hold on to. He taught them what they did not know. He has done the same for every disciple since then, even me. Oh how I love my Savior!

Our “quiet-time” is about the passion that Christ has for us and our obsession and preoccupation with Him. Our discipline in coming to Him each day in His Word and in prayer will grow from “duty” to “passion” if we don’t give up meeting with Him this way when trials and persecution come. It will take ongoing sacrifices and dying to ourselves to see the full benefit of a passion-motivated walk with God.

Our daily quiet time with our Lord is crucial. Coming to Him first thing each day is what will prepare us for all the day’s responsibilities, situations, uprisings and disappointments; preparing us to think and do the right things as we keep His Kingdom before us. Coming to Him first thing each day prepares us for His coming and all that He said would precede that. If He didn’t want us to be ready for the things to come; things that would greatly affect us and our children/grandchildren, He wouldn’t have told us.

Satan tells us things about the future in order to instill fear in us so we will say and do the wrong things, but the Lord tells us things in order for us to be at peace and ready to confidently and eagerly do His will, no matter what.

According to the stats, most Christians do not have a daily quiet time with the Lord. “*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”* (1Timothy 4:1-2)

We might not want to know what we need to know because it prompts fear in us, or it requires us to make adjustments in our lives, or we don’t want to be responsible with that knowledge because it will upset the goals and plans we have and want to hold on to. This could be why so many Christians resist a quiet time with the Lord each day – to their own GREAT loss.

God holds each of us accountable to the light He sheds on us; to the knowledge we receive directly out of His Word by the Holy Spirit. He won’t necessarily hold us accountable to what we hear from people, or even from what our pastor says behind the pulpit or otherwise, but He will hold each of us responsible for what we receive from His Spirit in His Word and in prayer. Jesus didn’t say, “Hear what the pastor says to the churches.” Rather, *“Hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

I am not one that makes New Year’s resolutions, and mostly because I don’t like setting myself up to fail, but after all the things that have happened to me over the years because I have not been so attentive to the Holy Spirit’s presence in me, as I should’ve been, I have said to the Lord that I want to be more disciplined in hearing, yielding and waiting on the Holy Spirit for His encouragement, strength, guidance and wisdom

*“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.”* 1 Corinthians 2:12

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all as we each finish what is ours to do in spreading the Gospel and furthering Christ’s Kingdom. May we have strong marriages and families – united in Christ to hold out His words of life eternal in this dark and wicked world.