

How Much More the Holy Spirit

by Andrew Murray

The Holy Spirit is the chief gift of God, and we should pray for Him in faith and thanksgiving, resting on God's promise and command.

Scripture: Luke 11:13, John 14:16

Topics: "The Holy Spirit", "Prayer"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the profound gift of the Holy Spirit, highlighting that it is the greatest gift from the Father, surpassing all others. He explains that just as earthly fathers give good gifts to their children, God longs to give His Holy Spirit to those who ask, as it embodies His very essence and love. The Holy Spirit is essential for spiritual life, guiding believers in truth, prayer, and empowerment for service. Murray encourages believers to seek the Holy Spirit earnestly, trusting in God's promise to fill them abundantly. He concludes with a call to pray for the Spirit not only for personal needs but also for the Church and others, reinforcing the importance of faith in receiving this divine gift.

Transcript

'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?'--Luke xi. 13.

IN the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord had already given utterance to His wonderful HOW MUCH MORE? Here in Luke, where He repeats the question, there is a difference. Instead of speaking, as then of giving good gifts, He says, 'How much more shall the heavenly Father give THE HOLY SPIRIT?' He thus teaches us that the chief and the best of these gifts is the Holy Spirit, or rather, that in this gift all others are comprised. The Holy Spirit is the first of the Father's gifts, and the one He delights most to bestow. The Holy Spirit is therefore the gift we ought first and chiefly to seek.

The unspeakable worth of this gift we can easily understand. Jesus spoke of the Spirit as 'the promise of the Father;' the one promise in which God's Fatherhood revealed itself. The best gift a good and wise father can bestow on a child on earth is his own spirit. This is the great object of a father in education--to reproduce in his child his own disposition and character. If the child is to know and understand his father; if, as he grows up, he is to enter into all his will and plans; if he is to have his highest joy in the father, and the father in him,--he must be of one mind and spirit with him. And so it is impossible to conceive of God bestowing any higher gift on His child than this, His own Spirit. God is what He is through His Spirit; the Spirit is the very life of God. Just think what it means--God giving His own Spirit to His child on earth.

Or was not this the glory of Jesus as a Son upon earth, that the Spirit of the Father was in Him? At His baptism in Jordan the two things were united,--the voice, proclaiming Him the Beloved Son, and the Spirit, descending upon Him. And so the apostle says of us, 'Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' A king seeks in the whole education of his son to call forth in him a kingly spirit. Our Father in heaven desires to educate us as His children for the holy, heavenly life in which He dwells, and for this gives us, from the depths of His heart, His own Spirit. It was this which was the whole aim of Jesus when, after having made atonement with His own blood, He entered for us into God's presence, that He might obtain for us, and send down to dwell in us, the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit of the Father, and of the Son, the whole life and love of the Father and the Son are in Him; and, coming down into us, He lifts us up into their fellowship. As Spirit of the Father, He sheds abroad the Father's love, with which He loved the Son, in our hearts, and teaches us to live in it. As Spirit of the Son, He breathes in us the childlike liberty, and devotion, and obedience in which the Son lived upon earth. The Father can bestow no higher or more wonderful gift than this: His own Holy Spirit, the Spirit of sonship.

This truth naturally suggests the thought that this first and chief gift of God must be the first and chief object of all prayer. For every need of the spiritual life this is the one thing needful, the Holy Spirit. All the fulness is in Jesus; the fulness of grace and truth, out of which we receive grace for grace. The Holy Spirit is the appointed conveyancer, whose special work it is to make Jesus and all there is in Him for us ours in personal appropriation, in blessed experience. He is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; as wonderful as the life is, so wonderful is the provision by which such an agent is provided to communicate it to us. If we but yield ourselves entirely to the disposal of the Spirit, and let Him have His way with us, He will manifest the life of Christ within us. He will do this with a Divine power, maintaining the life of Christ in us in uninterrupted continuity. Surely, if there is one prayer that should draw us to the Father's throne and keep us there, it is this: for the Holy Spirit, whom we as children have received, to stream into us and out from us in greater fulness.

In the variety of the gifts which the Spirit has to dispense, He meets the believer's every need. Just think of the names He bears. The Spirit of grace, to reveal and impart all of grace there is in Jesus. The Spirit of faith, teaching us to begin and go on and increase in ever believing. The Spirit of adoption and assurance, who witnesses that we are God's children, and inspires the confiding and confident Abba, Father! The Spirit of truth, to lead into all truth, to make each word of God ours in deed and in truth. The Spirit of prayer, through whom we speak with the Father; prayer that must be heard. The Spirit of judgment and burning, to search the heart, and convince of sin. The Spirit of holiness, manifesting and communicating the Father's holy presence within us. The Spirit of power, through whom we are strong to testify boldly and work effectually in the Father's service. The Spirit of glory, the pledge of our inheritance, the preparation and the foretaste of the glory to come. Surely the child of God needs but one thing to be able really to live as a child: it is, to be filled with this Spirit.

And now, the lesson Jesus teaches us today in His school is this: That the Father is just longing to give Him to us if we will but ask in the childlike dependence on what He says: 'If ye know to give good gifts unto your children, HOW MUCH MORE shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.' In the words of God's promise, 'I will pour out my Spirit abundantly;' and of His command, 'Be ye filled with the Spirit' we have the measure of what God is ready to give, and what we may obtain. As God's children, we have already received the Spirit. But we still need to ask and pray for His special gifts and operations as we require them. And not only this, but for Himself to take complete and entire possession; for His unceasing momentary guidance. Just as the branch, already filled with the sap of the vine, is ever crying

for the continued and increasing flow of that sap, that it may bring its fruit to perfection, so the believer, rejoicing in the possession of the Spirit, ever thirsts and cries for more. And what the great Teacher would have us learn is, that nothing less than God's promise and God's command may be the measure of our expectation and our prayer; we must be filled abundantly. He would have us ask this in the assurance that the wonderful HOW MUCH MORE of God's Father-love is the pledge that, when we ask, we do most certainly receive.

Let us now believe this. As we pray to be filled with the Spirit, let us not seek for the answer in our feelings. All spiritual blessings must be received, that is, accepted or taken in faith.¹ Let me believe, the Father gives the Holy Spirit to His praying child. Even now, while I pray, I must say in faith: I have what I ask, the fulness of the Spirit is mine. Let us continue steadfast in this faith. On the strength of God's Word we know that we have what we ask. Let us, with thanksgiving that we have been heard, with thanksgiving for what we have received and taken and now hold as ours, continue steadfast in believing prayer that the blessing, which has already been given us, and which we hold in faith, may break through and fill our whole being. It is in such believing thanksgiving and prayer, that our soul opens up for the Spirit to take entire and undisturbed possession. It is such prayer that not only asks and hopes, but takes and holds, that inherits the full blessing. In all our prayer let us remember the lesson the Saviour would teach us this day, that, if there is one thing on earth we can be sure of, it is this, that the Father desires to have us filled with His Spirit, that He delights to give us His Spirit.

And when once we have learned thus to believe for ourselves, and each day to take out of the treasure we hold in heaven, what liberty and power to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit on the Church of God, on all flesh, on individuals, or on special efforts! He that has once learned to know the Father in prayer for himself, learns to pray most confidently for others too. The Father gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, not least, but most, when they ask for others.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Father in heaven! Thou didst send Thy Son to reveal Thyself to us, Thy Father-love, and all that that love has for us. And He has taught us, that the gift above all gifts which Thou wouldst bestow in answer to prayer is, the Holy Spirit.

O my Father! I come to Thee with this prayer; there is nothing I would--may I not say, I do--desire so much as to be filled with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. The blessings He brings are so unspeakable, and just what I need. He sheds abroad Thy love in the heart, and fills it with Thy self. I long for this. He breathes the mind and life of Christ in me, so that I live as He did, in and for the Father's love. I long for this. He endues with power from on high for all my walk and work. I long for this. O Father! I beseech Thee, give me this day the fulness of Thy Spirit.

Father! I ask this, resting on the words of my Lord: 'HOW MUCH MORE THE HOLY SPIRIT.' I do believe that Thou hearest my prayer; I receive now what I ask; Father! I claim and I take it: the fulness of Thy Spirit is mine. I receive the gift this day again as a faith gift; in faith I reckon my Father works through the Spirit all He has promised. The Father delights to breathe His Spirit into His waiting child as He tarries in fellowship with Himself. Amen.

1The Greek word for receiving and taking is the same. When Jesus said, 'Everyone that asketh receiveth,' He used the same verb as at the Supper, 'Take, eat,' or on the resurrection morning, 'Receive,' accept, take, 'the Holy Spirit.' Receiving not only implies God's bestowment, but our acceptance.

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