

The Blessing of Victory; the More Abundant Life

by Andrew Murray

The sermon emphasizes the importance of victory over prayerlessness and the experience of the more abundant life, which is lived out in us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Matthew 17:8, John 10:10, John 16:15, Romans 8:37, 2 Corinthians 2:14, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Ephesians 3:20-21, Philippians 4:13, 1 Timothy 1:14, Hebrews 9:14

Topics: "Abundant Life", "Prayer"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the transformative power of prayer and the abundant life that comes from a deep, unbroken fellowship with God. He encourages believers to seek liberation from prayerlessness, which hinders their spiritual growth and connection with the Father. Murray highlights that through the Holy Spirit, Christians can experience the fullness of Christ's life, enabling them to live victoriously and serve as vessels of blessing to others. He calls for a commitment to persistent prayer, which leads to a greater understanding of God's omnipotence and grace. Ultimately, Murray assures that the abundant life is available to all who surrender fully to Christ and rely on the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

If now we are delivered from the sin of prayerlessness, and understand how this deliverance may continue to be experienced, what will be the fruit of our liberty? He who sees this aright will, with renewed earnestness and perseverance, seek after this liberty. His life and experience will indeed be an evidence that he has obtained something of unspeakable worth. He will be a living witness of the blessing which victory has brought.

Consider -

1. The blessedness of unbroken fellowship with God

Think of the confidence in the Father which will take the place of the reproach and self-condemnation which was the earlier characteristic of our lives. Think of the deep consciousness that God's almighty grace has effected something in us, to prove that we really bear his image and are fitted for a life of communion with him and prepared to glorify him. Think how we, notwithstanding our conviction of our nothingness, may live as true children of a King, in communion with their Father, and may manifest

something of the character of our Lord Jesus in the holy fellowship with his Father which he had when on earth. Think how in the inner chamber the hour of prayer may become the happiest time in the whole do for us, and how God may use us to take a share in the carrying out of his plans, and make us fountains of blessing for the world around us.

2. The power which we may have for the work to which we are called

The preacher will learn to receive his message really from God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and to deliver it in that power to the congregation. He will know where he can be filled with the love and zeal which will enable him, in his rounds of pastoral visiting, to meet and help each individual in a spirit of tender compassion. He will be able to say with Paul: 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Ph 4.13). 'We are more than conquerors through him that loved us' (Rom. 8.37). 'We are ambassadors for Christ ... we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God' (2 Cor. 5.20). These are no vain dreams or pictures of a foolish imagination. God has given us Paul an illustration, so that, however we may differ from him in gifts or calling, yet in inner experience we may know the all-sufficiency of grace which can do all things for as it did for him.

3. The prospect which opens before us for the future

This is to be consecrated to take part as intercessors in great work of bearing on our hearts the need of the Church and world. Paul sought to arouse men to pray all saints, and he tells us what a conflict he had for those who had not yet seen his face. In his personal presence he was subject to conditions of time and place, but in Spirit he had power in the name of Christ to pray blessing on those who had not yet heard of the Saviour.

In addition to his life in connection with men here on earth, far or near, he lived another, a heavenly life - one of love and of a wonderful power in prayer which he continually exercised. We can hardly form a conception of the power God will bestow, if only we get freed from the sin of prayerlessness and pray with the daring which reaches heaven and brings down blessing in the almighty name of Christ.

What a prospect! Minister and missionaries brought by God's grace to pray, let us say twice as much as formerly, with twofold faith and joy! What a difference it would make in the preaching, in the prayer meeting, in the fellowship with others! What a gentle power would come down in an inner chamber, sanctified by communion with God and his love in Christ! What an influence would be exercised on believers, in urging them forward to the work of intercession! How greatly would this influence be felt in the Church and among the heathen! What power might be exercised over ministers of other churches, and who knows how God might use us for his Church through the whole world! Is it not worth while to sacrifice everything, and to beseech God without ceasing to give us real and full victory over the prayerlessness which has covered us with such shame?

Why do I now write these things and extol so highly the blessedness of victory over the sin which doth so easily beset us' and which has so terribly robbed us of the power which God has intended for us? I can give an answer. I know all too well what low thoughts we have concerning the promises and the power of God and how prone we are always to backslide, to limit God's power, and to deem it impossible for him to do greater things than we have seen. It is a glorious thing to get to know God in a new way in the inner chamber. That, however, is but the beginning. It is something still greater and more glorious to know God as the all-sufficient One and to wait on his Spirit to open our hearts and minds wide to receive the great things, the new things which he really longs to bestow on those who wait for him.

God's object is to encourage faith and to make his children and servants see that they must take trouble to understand and rely upon the unspeakable greatness and omnipotence of God, so that they may take literally and in a childlike spirit this word: 'Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think ... be glory ... throughout all ages' (Eph. 3.20, 21). Oh, that we knew what a great and glorious God we have!

Someone may ask: 'May not this note of certain victory become a snare and lead to levity and pride?' Undoubtedly. That which is the highest and best on earth is always liable to abuse. How, then, can we be saved from this? Through nothing so surely as through true prayer, which brings us really into contact with God. The holiness of God, sought for in persistent prayer, will cover our sinfulness. The omnipotence and greatness of God will make us feel our nothingness. Fellowship with God in Jesus Christ will lead us to the experience that there is in us no good thing, and that we can have fellowship with God only as our faith become a humbling of ourselves as Christ humbled himself, and we truly live in him as he is in the Father.

Prayer is not merely coming to God to ask something from him. It is above all fellowship with God and being brought under the power of his holiness and love, till he takes possession of us and stamps our entire nature with the lowliness of Christ, which is the secret of all true worship.

Yes, it is in Christ Jesus that we draw near to the Father, as those who have died with Christ and have entirely done with their own life, as those in whom lives and whom he enables to say: 'Christ liveth in me'. What we have said about the work that the Lord Jesus does in us to deliver us from prayerlessness is true not only of the beginning of the life of prayer, and of the joy which a new experience of power to pray causes us, it is true for the whole life of prayer all the day long. 'Through him' we have access to the Father. In this always, as in the whole spiritual life, 'Christ is all.' 'They saw no man save Jesus only' (Matt. 17.8).

May God strengthen us to a belief that there is certain victory prepared for us, and that the blessing will be what the heart of man has not conceived! God will do this for those who love him.

This does not come to us all at once. God has great patience with his children. He bears with us in our slow progress with fatherly patience. Let each child of God rejoice in all that God's word promises. The stronger our faith, the more earnestly will we persevere to the end.

The more abundant life

Our Lord spoke this word concerning the more abundant life when he said that he had come to give his life for his sheep: 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly' (John 10. 10). A man may have life, and yet, through lack of nourishment, or through illness, there may be no abundance of life or power. This was the distinction between the Old Testament and the New. In the former there was indeed life, under the law, but not the abundance of grace of the New Testament. Christ had given life to his disciples, but they could receive the abundant life only through his resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

All true Christians have received life from Christ. The greater portion of them, however, know nothing about the more abundant life which he is willing to bestow. Paul speaks constantly of this. He says about himself that the grace of God was 'exceeding abundant' (1 Tim. 1.14). 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Phil. 4.13). 'Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ' (2. Cor. 2.14). 'We are more than conquerors through him that loved us' (Rom. 8.37).

We have spoken of the sin of prayerlessness, and the means of deliverance, and how to be kept free from that sin. What has been said on these points is all included in that expression of Christ: 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' It is of the utmost importance for us so to understand this more abundant life, that we may clearly see that for a true life of prayer nothing less is necessary than that we should walk in an ever increasing experience of that overflowing life.

It is possible for us to commence this conflict against prayerlessness in dependence on Christ, and looking to him to be assisted and kept in it, and yet to be disappointed. This is the case when prayerlessness is looked upon as the one sin against which we must strive. It must be recognised as part of the whole life of the flesh and as closely connected with other sins which spring from the same source. We forget that the entire flesh with all its affections, whether manifested in the body or soul, must be regarded as crucified, and be handed over to death. We must not be satisfied with a feeble life, but must seek for an abundant life. We must surrender ourselves entirely, that the Spirit may take full possession of us, so manifesting that life in us that there may come an entire transformation in our spiritual being, by which the complete mastery of Christ and the Spirit is recognised.

What is it, then, which peculiarly constitutes this abundant life? We cannot too often repeat, or in different ways too often set it forth - the abundant life is nothing less than the full Jesus having the full mastery over our entire being, through the power of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit makes known in us the fullness of Christ, and the abundant life which he gives, it will be chiefly in three aspects:

1. As the crucified one

Not merely as the one who died for us, to atone for our sins; but as he who has taken us up with himself on the cross to die with him, and who now works out in us the power of his cross and death. You have the true fellowship with Christ when you can say: 'I have been crucified with Christ - he, the crucified one, lives in me.' The feelings and the disposition which were in him, his lowliness and obedience even to the death of the cross - these were what he referred to when he said of the Holy Spirit: 'He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you' (John 16.15) - not as an instruction, but as childlike participation of the same life which was in him.

Do you desire that the Holy Spirit should take full possession of you, so as to cause the crucified Christ to dwell in you? Understand then, that this is just the end for which he has been given, and this he will surely accomplish in all who yield themselves to him.

2. As the risen one

The Scripture frequently mentions the resurrection in connection with the wonder-working power of God, by which Christ was raised from the dead; and from which comes the assurance of 'the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead' (Eph. 1.19, 20). Do not pass hastily from these words. Turn back and read them once more, and learn the great lesson that, however powerless and weak you feel, the omnipotence of God is working in you; and, if you only believe, will give you in daily life a share in the resurrection of his Son.

Yes, the Holy Spirit can fill you with the joy and victory of the resurrection of Christ, as the power of your daily life, here in the midst of the trials and temptations of this world. Let the cross humble you to death. God will work out the heavenly life in you through his Spirit. Ah, how little have we understood that it is

entirely the work of the Holy Spirit to make us partakers of the crucified and risen Christ, and to conform us to his life and death!

3. As the glorified one

The glorified Christ is he who baptises with the Holy Spirit. When the Lord Jesus himself was baptised with the Spirit, it was because he had humbled himself and offered himself to take part in John's baptism of repentance - a baptism for sinners - in Jordan. Even so, when he took upon himself the work of redemption, he received the Holy Spirit to fit him for his work from that hour till on the cross he 'offered himself without spot to God' (Heb. 9.14). Do you desire that this glorified Christ should baptise you with the Holy Spirit? Offer yourself then to him for his service, to further his great work of making known to sinners the love of the Father.

God help us to understand what a great thing it is to receive the Holy Spirit with power from the glorified Jesus! It means a willingness - a longing of the soul - to work for him, and, if need be, to suffer for him. You have known and loved your Lord, and have worked for him, and have had blessing in that work; but the Lord has more than that to bestow. He can so work in us, and in our brethren around us, and in the ministers of the church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, as to fill our hearts with adoring wonder.

Have you laid hold of it, my reader? The abundant life is neither more nor less than the full life of Christ as the crucified, the risen, the glorified one, who baptises with the Holy Ghost and reveals himself in our hearts and lives as Lord of all within us.

I read not long since an expression - 'Live in what must be. 'Do not live in your human imagination of what is possible. Live in the word - in the love and infinite faithfulness of the Lord Jesus. Even though it is slow, and with many a stumble, the faith that always thanks him not for experiences, but for the promises on which it can rely - goes on from strength to strength, still increasing in the blessed assurance that God himself will perfect his work in us.

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