

The Spirit Given to the Obedient

by Andrew Murray

The sermon teaches that loving obedience to Christ's commandments is essential for receiving the Holy Spirit and experiencing His transformative power in our lives.

Scripture: John 14:15

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Obedience"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God's commandments, as expressed in John 14:15-16 and Acts 5:32. He explains that obedience is essential for receiving the fullness of the Spirit, which empowers believers to live in accordance with God's will. Murray highlights that true love for Christ is demonstrated through obedience, and that the Spirit's indwelling is a reward for such obedience. He encourages believers to recognize their need for the Spirit's power and to actively pursue a life of loving obedience to experience the fullness of God's presence. Ultimately, Murray calls for a deeper understanding of the relationship between obedience and the Spirit's work in the life of a believer.

Transcript

If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments: and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth.' --John 14:15,16

'The Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.' Acts 5:32.

The truth which these words express has often suggested the question - How can this be? We need the Spirit to make us obedient; we long for the Spirit's power, just because we mourn so much the disobedience there still is, and desire to be otherwise. And how is this? The Saviour claims obedience as the condition of the Father's giving and our receiving the Spirit.

The difficulty will be removed if we remember what we have more than once seen, that there is a twofold manifestation of the Spirit of God, corresponding to the Old and New Testament. In the former, He works as the Spirit of God, preparing the way for the higher revelation of God, as the Father of Jesus Christ. In this way He had worked in Christ's disciples, as the Spirit of conversion and faith. What they were now about to receive was something higher--the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, communicating the power from on high, the experience of His full salvation. And though now, to all believers under the New Testament economy, the Spirit in them is the Spirit of Christ, there is still something that corresponds to the twofold

dispensation. Where there is not much knowledge of the Spirit's work, or where His workings in a Church or an individual are but feeble, there even believers will not get beyond the experience of His preparatory workings; though He be in them, they know Him not in His power as the Spirit of the glorified Lord. They have Him in them to make them obedient; it is only as they yield obedience to this His more elementary work, the keeping of Christ's commandments, that they will be promoted to the higher experience of His conscious indwelling, as the Representative and Revealer of Jesus in His glory. 'If ye love me, keep my commandments: and I will pray the Father, and He will send you another Comforter.'

The lesson is one we cannot study too attentively. In Paradise, in the angels of heaven, in God's own Son, by obedience and obedience alone, could the relationship with the Divine Being be maintained, and admission secured to closer experience of His Love and His Life. God's will revealed is the expression of His hidden perfection and being; only in accepting and doing the will, in the entire giving up for the will to possess and use as He pleases, are we fitted for entering the Divine Presence. Was it not thus even with the Son of God? It was when, after a life in holy humility and obedience for thirty years, He had spoken that word of entire consecration, 'It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,' and given Himself to a baptism for the sins of His people, that He was baptized with the Spirit. The Spirit came because of His obedience. And again, it was after He had learned obedience in suffering, and became obedient to the death of the cross, that He again received the Spirit from the Father (Acts 2: 33) to pour out on His disciples. The fulness of the Spirit for His body the Church was the reward of obedience. And this law of the Spirit's coming, as revealed in the Head, holds for every member of the body : obedience is the indispensable condition of the Spirit's indwelling. 'If ye love me, keep my commandments: and the Father will send you the Spirit.'

Christ Jesus had come to prepare the way for the Spirit's coming. Or rather, His outward coming in the flesh was the preparation for His inward coming in the Spirit to fulfil the promise of a Divine indwelling. The outward coming appealed to the soul, with its mind and feeling, and affected these. It was only as Christ in His outward coming was accepted, as He was loved and obeyed, that the Inward and more Intimate revelation would be given. Personal attachment to Jesus, the personal acceptance of Him as Lord and Master to love and obey, was the disciples' preparation for the baptism of the Spirit. And so now , it is as in a tender listening to the voice of conscience, and a faithful effort to keep the commands of Jesus, we prove our love to Him, that the heart will be prepared for the fulness of the Spirit. Our attainments may fall short of our aims, we may have to mourn that what we would we do not--if the Master sees the whole-hearted surrender to His will, and the faithful obedience to what we already have of the leadings of His Spirit, we may be sure that the full gift will not be withheld.

Do not these words suggest to us the two great reasons why the presence and the power of the Spirit in the Church is so feebly realized ? We do not understand that as the obedience of love must precede the fulness of the Spirit, so the fulness of the Spirit must still follow on it. They err who want the fulness of the Spirit before they obey, no less than those who think that obedience is already a sign that the fulness of the Spirit is there. '

Obedience must precede the baptism of the Spirit. John had preached Jesus as the true Baptist--baptizing with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Jesus took His disciples as candidates for this Baptism into a three years' course of training. First of all, attached them to Himself personally. He taught them to forsake all for Him. He called Himself their Master and Lord, and taught them to do what He said. And then in His farewell discourse He time after time spoke of obedience to His commands as the one condition of all further spiritual blessing. It is to be feared that the Church has not given this word Obedience the prominence

Christ gave it. Wrong views of the danger of Self-righteousness, of the way in which free Grace is to be exalted, of the power of sin and a need to be of sinning, with the natural reluctance of the flesh to accept a high standard of holiness, have been the causes. While the freedom of grace and the simplicity of faith have been preached, the absolute necessity of obedience and holiness has not been equally insisted on. It has been thought that only those who had the fulness of the Spirit could be obedient. It was not seen that obedience was the lower platform, -that the baptism of the Spirit, the full revelation of the glorified Lord as the Indwelling One in His power to work in us and through us His mighty works, was something higher, the Presence that the obedient should inherit. It was not seen that simple and full allegiance to every dictate of conscience, and every precept of the word, that a 'walk worthy of the Lord to all well-pleasing,' was to be the passport to that full life in the Spirit in which He would witness to the abiding Presence of the Lord in the heart.

As the natural consequence of the neglect of this truth, the companion truth was also forgotten: The obedient must and may look for the fulness of the Spirit. The promise of the special, conscious, active indwelling of the Spirit to the obedient is a thing to many Christians unknown. The great part of life is spent in mourning over disobedience, over the want of the Spirit's power, and praying for the Spirit to help them to obey, instead of rising in the strength of the Spirit already in them to obedience, as indeed possible and necessary. The thought of the Holy Spirit being specially sent to the obedient to give in them the Presence of Jesus as a continuous reality, that He might do in them the greater works, even as the Father had worked in Him, was hardly thought of. The meaning of the life of Jesus as our example is not understood. How distinctly there was with Him the outward lowly life of trial and obedience in preparation for the hidden spiritual one of Power and Glory! It is this inner life that we are made partakers of in the gift of the Spirit of the glorified Jesus. But in our inner personal participation of that gift we must walk in the way He dedicated for us; as in the crucifixion of the flesh we yield ourselves to God's will, for Him to do in us what He wills, and for us also to do what He wills, we shall experience that God is to be found nowhere but in His will. His will in Christ, accepted and done by us, with the heart in which it is done, is the home of the Holy Spirit. The revelation of the Son in His perfect obedience was the condition of the giving of the Spirit; the acceptance of the Son in love and obedience is the path to the indwelling of the Spirit.

It is this truth which has in these latter years come home with power to the hearts of many in the use of the words full surrender and entire consecration. As they understood that the Lord Jesus did indeed claim implicit obedience, that the giving up all to Him and His will was absolutely necessary, and in the power of His grace truly possible, and in the faith of His power did it, they found the entrance to a life of peace and strength formerly unknown. Many are learning, or have to learn, that they do not yet fully know the lesson. They will find that there are applications of this principle beyond what we have conceived. As we see how in the all-pervading power of the Spirit, as we already possess Him, every movement of our life must be brought into allegiance to Jesus, and give ourselves to it in faith, we shall also see that the Spirit of the glorified Lord can make Him present and work His mighty works in us and through us, in a way far beyond what we can ask or think. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit was intended by God and Christ to be to the Church more, oh! so much more, than we have yet known., Oh! shall we not yield ourselves, in a love and obedience that will sacrifice anything for Jesus, that our hearts may be enlarged for the fulness of His blessing prepared for us.

Let us cry to God very earnestly, that He may waken His Church and people to take in this double lesson: A living obedience is indispensable to the full experience of the indwelling; the full experience of the indwelling is what a loving obedience may certainly claim. Let each of us even now say to our Lord that we

do love Him, and keep His commandments. In however much feebleness and failure it be, still let us speak it out to Him as the one purpose of our souls; this He will accept. Let us believe in the indwelling of the Spirit as already given to us, when in the obedience of faith we gave ourselves to Him. Let us believe that the full indwelling, with the revelation of Christ within, can be ours. And let us be content with nothing less than the loving, reverent, trembling, but blessed consciousness that we are the Temples of the Living God, because the Spirit of God dwelleth in us.

Blessed Lord Jesus ! with my whole heart do I accept the teaching of these words of Thine. And most earnestly do I beseech Thee to write the truth ever deeper in my heart, as one of the laws of Thy Kingdom, that Loving Obedience may look for a Loving Acceptance, sealed by ever-increasing experience of the Power of the Spirit.

I thank Thee for what Thy word teaches of what the Love and Obedience of Thy disciples were. Though still imperfect--for did they not all forsake Thee?--yet Thou didst cover it with the cloak of Thy love: 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh weak;' and accept it, feeble though it was. Saviour! with my whole heart I say I do love Thee, and would keep each one of Thy commandments.

Afresh I surrender myself to Thee for this. In the depths of my soul Thou seest there is but one desire, that Thy will should be done in me as in Heaven.

To every reproof of conscience I would bow very low. To every moving of Thy Spirit I would yield in implicit obedience. Into Thy death I give my will and life, that, being raised with Thee, the Life of Another even of Thy Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in me, and revealeth Thee, may be my life. Amen.

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