

Opened Eyes

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala emphasizes the necessity of the Holy Spirit for a deeper understanding and experience of God in the believer's life.

Duration: 22:47

Scripture: Psalm 119:18, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, John 14:26, Romans 8:16, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, Ephesians 6:10

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of experiential knowledge of God. He encourages the congregation to pray for the Holy Spirit to give them wisdom and revelation so that they can know God better. The preacher shares his personal experience of sometimes finding deep insights in the Bible, while other times feeling dry and getting nothing from it. He encourages the listeners to seek God's revelation and to have their hearts flooded with light. The sermon also touches on the potential of believers to be used by God and the importance of being strong in the Lord. The preacher references the book of Ephesians and highlights the significance of this letter in strengthening the church.

Transcript

I'd like to touch on an important verse in a way that we often don't think of it is the key there. Also, the idea of pastors or leaders in Iran or in America. Some are powerful in word as they preach.

The blessing of God is with them. They have faith, they just are reaching. And then others are barely just surviving.

And I meet a lot of those very discouraged. And this same truth is, I think, the linchpin for a lot of what we see. And I want us to be strong in the Lord.

How many wanna be absolutely strong in the Lord? This applies to all of us. In the book of Ephesians, Paul is writing to the church, most likely in Ephesus, although there's some question about whether this was really just to Ephesus or to a bunch of other churches. Doesn't really matter, it's the word of God.

Paul's writing, and toward the end of the first chapter, he says this, and you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. So he's reviewing with them how they became Christians. When did they become Christians? When they heard the message of truth and believed it, the gospel of your salvation.

When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal. Christians are marked when they become Christians, with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory. So what is this saying? Paul's reviewing it and saying, now you heard the gospel one day, and you believed it, that's how you became a Christian.

And when you believed and you became a Christian, you were born again, you were marked, you were stamped by God. What were you stamped with? You were stamped with the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit came into your life, indwelt you, and you were sealed, and that was the promise, the spirit in you is the promise that everything God has promised in the future, he will do it.

The down payment, you know those mortgages where you just have to put 2% down, 10% down? The Holy Spirit is the down payment, but everything else is on its way, and the proof of it is the sealing of the Holy Spirit. Then later he goes on to say to them, for this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and your love for all of God's people, isn't that a beautiful combination? Christians are supposed to have faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all of God's people. We have love for all people, not just for God's people, but the love we have for the world is a love of we wish them well, good will, we don't want anything bad to happen to anybody in the world, but the love that we have for Christians is a family love.

Those are our brothers and sisters, it's a deeper kind of love than even our love for the world. So all of God's people, not some of God's people, not a certain denomination, not a certain color of person, all of God's people, how many say amen? Now, ever since I heard about that, I have not stopped giving thanks for you. Remembering you in my prayers shows that Paul prayed for the people he ministered to, he thanked God for them, and he also interceded and prayed for them.

Now let's see what he asked. I keep asking, not once, I keep asking, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit, capital S, of wisdom and revelation so that you may know him better. Let's analyze that, because that raises some questions in our minds, doesn't it? I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit, capital S, the Holy Spirit.

Probably one of the worst faults in the King James Bible is that it uses Spirit when it should refer to the Holy Spirit with a capital S, with a small s, which is not at all what Paul meant. Paul would never use the word Spirit like that team had a good spirit, you know, had a good attitude, had a good direction, you know, they have a good spirit over there. No, when he says Spirit, he means the Holy Spirit.

So what is the Holy Spirit now gonna give them? I'm praying that he will give you the Spirit who will give you wisdom and revelation so that you may know him better. The word know there is not the word know, do you know your times table? Do you know that four times four is 16? Five times five is 25? It's not an intellectual knowing. He's saying I'm praying that the Spirit will come to you and give you wisdom and revelation so that you will know God better experientially.

You will experience him in new ways. You will know things about him. You will understand mysteries about God.

You will know his will for your life in a deeper way. And the only one who can impart that to you is what I'm praying for is that the Holy Spirit will come and give you that. Revelation is when the Spirit reveals

something to your heart, your innermost being, bypassing sometimes the brain, giving it to your heart first and then it goes to your brain so that you know it, but it's not mental learning like they do in college.

You can be a grade school dropout, a high school dropout, and know more about God than someone with a PhD because the Holy Spirit, wait, the Holy Spirit is teaching you and giving revelation. That means revealing, revealing things supernaturally. If you don't believe in the supernatural, this verse will mean nothing to you.

It's supernatural teaching and revelation of the Holy Spirit so that you will know him better experientially. You will really know him. You know, it's like somebody could say to Sylvia Glover, listen, Pastor Symbolist said that I should come to the church at a certain time, that he wanted to bless me with \$100, but I don't know, I only met him once and I don't know.

I heard it, I'm not sure I should even go to all the way down there. And Sylvia would say, hopefully, listen, no, no, no. If he said he'll do that, he'll be there and he'll give you that money.

Well, how do you know? Do you know when he was born? Do you know his birth date, his birth weight? Do you know what hospital he was born in? She said, no, I don't know that, but I know him. If he told you that, he meant it and he's gonna give you that. So you can know things about someone but not know the person.

How many get it, say amen. Paul says the spirit will not tell you things about Jesus. You and God, you will know God, you will experience God in a new way through the spirit.

So now we go on. I pray, this is now he's describing the process in another way, I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened or flooded with light in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you. What's waiting for us after death? Heaven, to be with God, to be with him forever.

The riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead. I'm not trying to go into all of this and teach from Ephesians, what I'm trying to say is this so that we can pray.

First of all, I want you to notice this. He just said you've been sealed with spirit, but now he says I pray that God will give you the spirit. Well wait a minute, do they have the spirit or do they not have the spirit? People have come into a very sad understanding of that by trying to be clever grammatically and saying never pray for more of the spirit because you have the spirit.

Either have the spirit or you don't have the spirit. If you have the spirit, never pray for the spirit because you already have the spirit. But that's not what Paul believed.

He's not praying that the spirit will pass through the ether and come from heaven into us. No, when he says you've been sealed with the spirit, but now I pray that God will give you. How would he give you the spirit if you already have the spirit? He's saying I'm praying that you will get a manifestation that is much deeper of the Holy Spirit in your life.

You have the Holy Spirit living in you, but there's so much more he wants to do in your life. You can't just walk around and say I'm born again, I'm born again, I have the spirit. That's great, that's where you begin.

But now I'm praying that he's gonna come into your life and flood your heart with light so that you're gonna start to see things. They'll be as real as this pulpit. They'll be as real as this microphone.

But you won't see them with these eyes. You will see them with these eyes. Let's put our hands together and say amen.

The eyes of your heart, the eyes of your heart will be flooded with light. For example here, that you will know the hope of his calling. Why is it that most Christians are just as afraid to die as most people in the street? Because they have no revelation of us waiting for us after we die.

If you knew what was happening after we die, you would say even so, come quickly Lord Jesus. Can we say amen to that? But if it's just a mental construct in your mind, if it's just a verse, oh yes, I go to prepare a place for you that where I am you may be also. If it's just a verse, it's like yes, I believe that mentally.

But it's not real. The Holy Spirit hasn't made real to you. It was so real to Paul that Paul said, I'm trapped, I don't know which to do.

I want to stay here and work, but I want to get out of here too because I know the Spirit has shown me what's waiting for me. And what's waiting for me is so much better than this mess that I'm living in. I want to get out of here.

But that only happens by the Spirit. Amen. That the Spirit would flood your eyes with light.

That you would have a spirit of revelation and you would know the hope of his calling, or one last one. And the amazing incomparable power that God has available for us. What kind of power? He said it's the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

And it's available to you. You can resist the devil and he will flee from you. You can say greater is he that's in us than he that's in the world.

But unless with all due respect to the Word of God, which I treasure and love, if it's just a verse in the Bible, it can just get mixed up with a thousand other things you read and it's in your brain. Oh, but when the Spirit comes and reveals it to you and you realize the power that's available to us. That's why you can pray great prayers for Iran.

Come to someone and say, there's no hope, the Mullahs are in charge, there's no hope. But you see the spirit of faith the man has who spoke to us? How does he have that? Because the Spirit has shown him that God is greater than every obstacle, every mountain, every problem, God is greater. And then another person says it is what it is and they get depressed.

And what's the sense? We just got to circle the wagons and hold on. But other people are saying, no, God can do anything. Come on, God can do anything.

I want you to notice that he's saying, I pray that God will give you the Spirit, capital S, the Holy Spirit, who gives revelation and wisdom in the knowledge of God that you will really know God better. Don't you want to know God better? Some people know the culture of America better than they know God. So guess what attracts them and pulls them? The culture of the society.

Some people know more about TV programs than they know about the Word of God. So what do you think occupies them? Well, of course, whatever's real to you, that's what appeals. To some people, it's

money.

Money is absolutely everything. So what do you think they live for? Money, but there's other riches that the Bible talks about that are stored up for us in heaven. But unless the Spirit makes that real, you're just going to live like the cat and the dog of the people in the street fighting for money, money, money, money.

And what are you going to take with you? Zero, zero. But are not Christians living materialistic lives? Why? Because that's what's real to them. That's the only thing they see.

They see with these eyes. They only hear with these ears. But oh, when the Spirit comes, he begins to reveal other things to you where you're willing to make sacrifices and say, no, I'll go underground into Iran.

Yeah, but you could get killed. I know, but it'll be worth it. It'll be worth it.

How do you know that? Oh, listen, God showed me it's worth it. I live, I live. I live for Christ.

If I die, I die for Christ. But see, that doesn't come by a pastor teaching. That comes by, I pray.

Notice, he said, I'm not going to teach you this. He said, I'm going to pray that God gives you the Spirit. All the great men and women who have been used by God through the church history, they've all been taught by the Holy Spirit.

God did some work in them as they waited and prayed and said, God, thank you for your Spirit. How many are Christians here today and the Holy Spirit lives inside of you? Lift your hand. How many at the same time want more of the Holy Spirit? Deeper, deeper, no, way, way deeper.

Let me just finish with this because I have found this true and it happened to me just recently when I was sick because I was messed up. I was sick. No excuse, but it happened this way.

I read the Word of God sometimes and the thing is leaping off the page to me. I see so many things in three verses that I don't even know what to do with it. I got to write it down and I just see it.

And other times, I read this Bible, I'll read a chapter, I get zero. That ever happen to anybody here? No, I mean, I get nothing. Brother Sam, I'm confessing.

I get nothing. I know what it's saying. I look at the subject, the verb, the object I studied.

And now I know when that happens and it's dry. Close it. Close it.

Close it and lift up your heart to God and say, God, give me a spirit of revelation in your Word. Teach me your Word. Isn't that what even the psalmist prayed in Psalm 119? Open my eyes, God.

What did he think? He wasn't talking about these eyes. He said, open my eyes that I might see new things from your Word, taught by the Holy Spirit. How many want to be taught by the Holy Spirit when you read God's Word? Now you have something you share with people and they go, where did you get that? Oh, I don't know.

I was just reading it and God made it real in my heart. Haven't you ever had that happen to you? How many have read the same passage over that you read 10 times and suddenly the spirit just begins to open it up and you go, wow, wow, wow, wow. I never saw that.

I never saw that. This, in closing, reminds us that Christianity is helpless without the Holy Spirit. If you make it all intellectual in teaching and training, that all has its place, I'm sure.

But the whole thing goes south. It goes bad. It goes sick.

And this is why God chose fishermen and tax collectors to be his first leaders because they couldn't trust in their intellectual skills. That's why some of the greatest men and women God's going to raise up, maybe in Iran. Look, he's talking about three month training.

Here in America, unless you have a PhD, some people believe you can't even be used by God. He's talking three months training because it's not by might nor by power but by my spirit, sayeth the Lord. A man or a woman who's been taught by God has a ring in their voice, has an authority in their tone, has an insight into what's happening.

You know, God can give us insight by the spirit into even what's going on in our life now. Hasn't that ever happened to you? I've had it happen to me. The Holy Spirit comes and shows me what's really going on.

What's really going on. He wants to show us, teach us. Otherwise, we just depend on our IQ and mine is not very good.

I want God, the Holy Spirit, to teach me. I want my heart to be flooded with light. I want to be able to see what's going on under the surface.

When Jesus met people, the disciples just saw people but Jesus saw other things. They saw a crowd of people and Jesus said, look, the fields. What fields? I don't see any fields.

No, don't you see it? He was being taught by the spirit. He was seeing things they couldn't see. That's what we need.

Brothers and sisters, the potential is unlimited of how God could use us. The potential is unlimited of how God can use us if the Holy Spirit just gets a deeper place to work in our lives. I want it.

The only thing that could hinder it is if you're living in unconfessed sin. Then all bets are off. I gotta tell you the truth.

If you got something going on that's not of God and you're not gonna confess it and give it up, then you could pray until three this morning. The Bible says, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. But all you have to do is say, God, I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired.

You know I'm frail, you know I make mistakes, but I've confessed that. Thank you for your mercy. Aren't you happy God is full of mercy? What I'm talking about doesn't come to people who are perfect because there's nobody perfect.

But you just have to be sincere. God, let the spirit come and do a new work in my life. Close your eyes with me.

God, that's what we want. There's people here who need a new deeper work of the spirit in their life. They have the spirit, but we're living in the shallows.

We want to go out into the deep water. We want the spirit to give us insight, teaching, understanding, so that we know you better. We're so aware of your power, we won't be afraid of a thing.

We're gonna be so sure of what heaven is about that death will not, death, where is your victory? Grave, where is your sting? Who are you to try to intimidate me? I belong to Jesus Christ. Oh God, give us that. Everybody hungry for that? Balcony, downstairs, come on, it's early.

I want to pray for a little while here with you. Just get out of your seat if you say, pastor, that was for me. I have the spirit, I'm born again, but I want the spirit to come and take me to a whole other level of Christianity.

I'm hungry for that. In fact, I think God has called me to do something, but I can't do it unless the spirit begins to give me revelation and wisdom. Just come out of your seat and stand right here, facing me in the front.

We're gonna have pastors and deacons and deaconesses lay hands on you. Or if you're a deacon and deaconess and you're hungry for God and you're tired of living on the level you're living, see, that's what it is. Paul says, I know you're Christians, I thank God for you.

You've been called, you've been changed. The spirit lives within you, you've been sealed with the spirit, but oh, am I praying that God will send the spirit and give you revelation and knowledge so that you know him better. Just pray, worship, thank him.

Ask him, seek him, wait before him. Open our eyes, Lord. Flood the eyes of our heart with light, Lord.

Give us revelation and understanding in who you are, God. And fill us with revelation and understanding, Lord. Oh, God, we need you, yes, Holy Spirit, we need you.

We confess, Lord. Gently lay your hand on someone's shoulder near you. Pray, pray out loud for them.

Someone will be praying for you, pray for them. Everywhere in the building, upstairs, downstairs, just gently lay your hand on their shoulder, their arm, and pray out loud for them. God, let them know you better.

Send the spirit of revelation and wisdom so that they'll know you better. Flood their eyes of their heart, Lord, with light so that they have understanding of who you are, how great your power is, the glorious hope we have as Christians, pray, pray for them, pray for them. Lift your voice, pray, God, help them.

While someone's praying for me, God, help them. Help them, Lord, help them. Give them more of your spirit, more of your spirit, more of your spirit.

We ask today for the Brooklyn Tabernacle, more of your spirit, Lord, more of your spirit, Lord. You know, before we dismiss, let's give a little concert of praise to God just with our mouths, not with our hands or clapping. Everybody just open your voice and praise him out loud right now, everybody.

Thank him for something, praise him for something. Give him a hallelujah, give him a thank you, Jesus. Gloria tu nombre, Senor, Gloria tu nombre, Senor.

You are well-owned and worthy, Lord. We give you praise, we give you honor, Lord. We give you a concert of praise.

You are good, you are good, God, you are good. Father, God, bless our brothers and sisters in Iran and our Iranian Christian brothers and sisters who are in Turkey and other parts of the world. In the midst of that mess, we are so happy you're doing great things, God.

Now let your face shine upon your people tonight and give us peace. Let everyone get home safely on subways, buses, cars, however, help us to be alert, to share Jesus with someone this week, invite someone to church, love someone, help someone, bless them in the name of the Lord. God, you make us fruitful.

Bring us back together on Sunday into the Lord's house, should you tarry, Lord. Thank you for my brothers and sisters. Thank you that I could be back here tonight, Lord.

I thank you. I ask your blessing now on all of us as we dismiss in Jesus' name, and everyone said. Amen.

Give a bunch of people a hug.

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