

The Gift

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon highlights the transformative power of prayer and the essential role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life.

Duration: 32:36

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:9-10, Luke 11:1-4, Luke 11:9-13

Topics: "Gift"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of seeing dust particles in the sunlight and relates it to how God's light reveals things we may not have noticed before. The speaker emphasizes the importance of giving and generosity in relationships, using the example of a person's willingness to give as a sign of real love and concern. The sermon also highlights the verse from John 3:16, emphasizing God's love for the world and His ultimate gift of His Son. The speaker encourages believers to ask God for more of the Holy Spirit in their lives, emphasizing the importance of seeking a deeper experience with Him.

Transcript

There are interesting books written by what are called the spiritual masters about prayer. There's a word in the Greek language which covers all communication between man and God. It's not the word for petition, that's a separate word.

There's a general word that is usually defined as prayer, but prayer has many different kinds of elements in it, doesn't it? It has the element when you're praising God, you're praying. Because you're communing with God. When you're requesting from God, you're having communion, prayer to God.

When you're interceding for another person, that's another form of prayer. There are long prayers where you pray and then you wait in just God's presence. And you listen, that's another form of prayer.

Like Habakkuk says, I'll set myself on a tower and see what God will say to me. That's another form of prayer. That's the form that is probably least practiced because we're in a rush.

But we're not going to be in a rush tonight. Because I'm speaking briefly and leaving the altars open now so we can just pray over on a certain subject. There's ejaculatory prayer where you're walking down a street and something's about to happen and an emergency comes.

You don't have to have time for Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. You just sometimes have a time for just help me Jesus. How many have ever had to pray just like that at a moment of danger, a moment of crisis? Just help me Lord.

There's praying without ceasing where the spirit of prayer just stays on you and you're offering up like continual petitions. As William Law points out in *A Serious Call to a Holy and Devout Life*, prayer is not about really words. Prayer is the movement of the heart.

Every time you feel a movement, a longing to talk to God, to wait on God, to reach for God. Every time you feel a need for God, that is not you at all. That's the Holy Spirit stirring you to pray.

How many have ever felt like a longing to praise God or call on God? Or you feel just, oh God, I need you. You don't have to say anything. Just that longing, that sigh.

I have a friend of mine in the ministry who when I'm with him, I notice sometimes he'll just say Jesus or Savior. He'll just say it intermittently during the day. And that's prayer.

And it's always stoked by the Holy Spirit because there is no praying unless the Holy Spirit is helping us. Holy Spirit is the only one who can engage our hearts to really reach out to the Lord. He helps us pray.

Otherwise we say prayers, but our heart is not in the prayer. Prayer is about asking and receiving. And one of the most beautiful examples the Lord gave us on that is about the fact that loving fathers always like to give to their children.

Loving fathers always love to give to their children or their grandchildren. You don't want to take something from someone you love. You always want to what? Give.

You want to give. I always tell girls in the church who are dating some guy and they ask me my opinion. I ask usually like, what does he give you? What does he pay for? What does he like to share with you? Because if a guy is cheap, you're in trouble.

How many say amen? Because one of the signs of real love and real concern is you want to give. You want to spend. Am I right? For God so loved the world that He gave.

And what did He give? His only begotten Son. In this one verse, it not only talks about that and encourages us to pray. In fact, it's the passage right after the one that you know so well, we often quote here.

Ask and you shall? Knock and what? Before that, seek and you'll find. Knock and it shall be open. Right after the Lord said that in Luke, look what He said.

Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or Jesus said, if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion. If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them who ask Him? That verse needs some analysis. Can we, let's just look at it again.

Which of you fathers, so now he's saying, here's what I want to teach you. How do fathers feel about their children, sons or daughters? If the son would ask for a fish because he's hungry, what father in his right mind who loves his son would give him a snake and scare him and disappoint him and frustrate him? What father would do that? No father who's in his right mind. No father who loves his son.

Then he goes further, and if he asks for an egg, so the two foods are what? Fish and egg. If he asks for an egg, would he give him a scorpion? Jesus said these words. Jesus is teaching us something.

He said, what father, if the son wants a fish, would he give him a snake? And if he was hungry for some eggs, let's say in the morning in our style of eating, would he put a scorpion on the plate? What father would do that? Now, the Lord then says something else. If you then, though you are evil, did you know that you were evil? Jesus said we all are. Compared to God, we all have a selfish principle in us that God doesn't have.

So he says, if you, relatively speaking, who are evil, who are selfish, even your selfishness is broken when it comes to your children. The most selfish people take care of their children, usually. People involved in the mafia and organized crime, they'll do anything for their daughters or their sons.

Other human beings they don't care about, but they have a soft spot. The hardest people in the world have a soft spot for their children. This is why we're very vulnerable and can be hurt by our children.

Because whoever you love the most can hurt you the most. Am I right or wrong? So that's what makes us vulnerable with people that we love. If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, and now here's the promise, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him? Well, that raises some biblical questions for a lot of people.

Because in a lot of churches, you would never hear anyone teach the people to ask for the Holy Spirit. Because we know the Bible teaches us that if anyone is born again, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit lives in them. Am I right? If anyone has not the Spirit of Christ, Romans 8, he doesn't belong to the Lord.

So we have the Holy Spirit in us. Why would we ever ask for the Holy Spirit? Well, in that question, there's a lot. The Holy Spirit is the one we want to start the new year with.

And today, this Tuesday and this coming Sunday, is the beginning of a new year for our church. Churches don't go by the calendar year, January 1st. Church, the church life is when summer vacations are over, kids are back in school.

It's like a new year in the fall. Am I right? Everyone's back in another city. We celebrate the new year too.

But for pastors and leaders, you have like a new beginning in the fall. And I want to start with the way Carol and I began when we started ministering at the Brooklyn Tabernacle. If you being evil, you being selfish, know how to give good gifts to your children, notice what the Lord doesn't say here, then your heavenly Father will give good gifts to you when you pray.

Notice, when will He give the Holy Spirit? Give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. How many people don't have more of an experience with the Holy Spirit because they don't ask Him? They don't ask their Father, I want more of your Holy Spirit in my life. Well, since the Holy Spirit is a person, let's look at it this way.

I read the most amazing thing that Andrew Murray said just recently. And he said this, and if this is true, as I said to some pastors who were visiting me today, it explains a lot of the problems around the world and around America in the church. He said this, it's just as important to understand the person and the work of the Holy Spirit as it is to understand the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's just as important to understand who the Holy Spirit is and how He works than it is to understand who Jesus is and what He has done for us. Because the Father's great gift to us is His Son. The Son's great gift to us is the Spirit.

And most of us know a lot about the Father and a lot of us know, and you can't know too much about the Son, we're Christians, we're named after Christ, who's our Savior, our Lord. But He sent the Spirit, and a lot of us do not know about the person of the Holy Spirit. We're not used to saying, Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me.

Holy Spirit, lead me. But when you read the book of Acts, they were constantly getting familiar with this Holy Spirit who is co-equal with the Father and the Son. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, the triune God, a mystery, three in one, not three gods, one God, expressing, or what word can be used, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Now, since Jesus is in heaven and He sent the Holy Spirit, anything that can happen in your life that's good this September, it has to be the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not here. He sent the Holy Spirit to represent Him.

That's why the things of God, the things of Jesus, are never real to us unless the Spirit is working in our lives. Otherwise, it's just a concept. You can talk about the blood of Jesus, but unless the Holy Spirit makes that real to you, you're going to be in condemnation.

But the minute the Holy Spirit takes the scales off of your eyes, you say, whom the Son sets free is free indeed. And it's not a concept, it's not words, it's a reality. That's why the Holy Spirit was sent, to make the things of Christ real to us.

So when you're dead in your spirit, and the things of God aren't real, what you need is more of the Holy Spirit. We'll get to that in a moment. When you have no appetite for the Word of God, that's a sign the Holy Spirit's not active in your life.

Because He wrote this book, and when He's active, He always is drawing you to the Word of God. He's always making you hungry for the Word of God. How many have ever been made hungry for the Word of God by the Holy Spirit? You're hungry, you want to hear it preached, you want to read it, you want to discuss it.

That's not you, that's not Jim Cymbala. I have nothing in me that would want the Word of God, but the Holy Spirit in me working. Oh, that's another whole thing.

When we're lacking love, when we're lacking courage, when we're lacking anything, it's a shortage of the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives. Well, how can you ask for a person for who's already there? He's already in my life, how can I ask for more of Him? Isn't it true that I either have Him or I don't have Him? Yet Jesus said, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them who ask Him? And we see, brothers and sisters, in the book of Acts, that although they received from the Holy Spirit, in the spiritual realm, they were always hungry for more control of the Holy Spirit. Paul says, I know that you love one another, but here's what I'm praying, that your love may abound, because whatever we have from God, we can have more of it.

How many say amen? You find out in the Bible over and over again, they have things, yet they're longing for those same things. They have power, but they want more power. They have patience, but they want

more patience.

They're experiencing God, but they want more of God. And that's how it is about the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, our lives automatically become barren and dry and fruitless, because He's the one that makes the difference, the Holy Spirit of God.

And He's right now listening to me. He's in this room. How many believe that? He knows everything about you.

He's the one who wants to direct you in the purposes of God. He's the one who wants to do that. He's the one who's helped me a thousand, ten thousand times.

How many have felt the Holy Spirit come to your side and help you through things you thought you couldn't get through? Wave your hand at me. I mean, without the Holy Spirit, we're just sunk. We're just sunk.

When we're wounded and we've been hurt, He's the one who comforts us. When we're lacking power over sin, He's the one who gives us victory over sin. You can't do it by willpower.

So let's just think here why He was sent and what we need more of in our lives. Number one, and this is the painful one, we need more of the Holy Spirit because when He comes in deeper rivers, deeper manifestations of the Spirit, people get convicted of sin because Jesus said when He comes, He will convict the world of sin. You know what you find when you get more of the Holy Spirit working in your life, when He takes more and more control? You get convicted about sins you used to see in other people and never saw in yourself.

When the Holy Spirit comes, you stop judging other people because you're too busy taking care of your own kitchen. How many know what I'm talking about? Say amen. When the Holy Spirit's not working, you judge everyone.

Oh, you're self-righteous. I'm self-righteous. I'm looking down my nose at everybody.

When the Holy Spirit begins to work, you see convictions about things. You get convicted about things. This is one of the reasons why new Christians can get discouraged if they don't understand this because they grow in God.

The Holy Spirit begins to convict them more, and they went, I thought when I got saved, I would have peace and joy, but I'm getting sensitive about a lot of different things. But this is the way the Holy Spirit makes us more like Jesus. He got to get all the junk out of the place, all the dirty stuff out of our place.

So when you ask for more of the Holy Spirit, you say, Lord, I want more of your Spirit. You got to prepare it. He's going to start shining that light on attitudes and things.

How many, since you've been a Christian, like the God's done a new thing, and you become convicted of things that you were not convicted of before. You get convicted over little sentences. You get convicted over the littlest thing that didn't bother you before.

It's like I wrote in that last book I did, Spirit Rising. I was sitting in a room studying the Word of God, in my home, and the light was shining in. The morning light was shining in, and I was dressed, and I had a pair of doggers or something on, and I thought of something that I read or something, and I just, no, something

said, someone talked to me on the phone and said something funny, and I went, you got to be kidding.

And I hit my pants, my leg, and the sun happened to be shining in there. And as I hit my leg, like 10,000 pieces of something came flying out of my, right in the sunlight, I could see it. All little dust and spirogyra or amoebas or whatever those things are, they were in those fresh pants, clean pants.

And that's how it is with God. When he shines his light on you, you start to see things you never saw before. You were looking good before, weren't you? I was looking good before.

And then the Holy Spirit has come. I remember a meeting in the church that I kind of grew up in that I really went to starting in my college years, I should say. And a bunch of us were really praying, and God had stirred us that the Holy Spirit would come in a stronger way.

Because unless the Holy Spirit comes in a meeting, it doesn't matter what Pastor Delina preaches or I preach or anyone preaches, Charles Stanley or the Apostle Paul, unless the Holy Spirit comes, it's just a sermon. As the minister got up to preach, he started to, and he was a good preacher, he started to like choke or just he couldn't get his thoughts together. And then he said, I'm struggling here with something.

Something's wrong here. And as he began to try to get into the sermon, he had to just stop and he closed his Bible. He said, I don't know about God.

And suddenly the Holy Spirit just caused everybody to just lift their hearts up to God in prayer. And with nobody saying anything, people started coming forward confessing sin. It was a remarkable thing.

The meeting began at 11. It was still going on at three o'clock in the afternoon. Deacons were coming up, taking their cigarettes and stuff they were hiding from the pastor, dumping it on the pulpit.

That's the truth. Everybody, you know, just... A woman got up in front of the whole church and said, I just want to tell you the truth. I don't like half of you.

I haven't, I haven't liked half of you. And I've been talking about you, but I can't take it anymore. And I want to be right with God.

How many know that's the Holy Spirit? Can we put our hands together? That's the Holy Spirit. How many of you like me this September, you want to become more like Jesus? You know what? This is the best gift that God can give us. The Holy Spirit, not a car.

If you're living wrong and you have a car, what good will the car do you? Or even food or anything. It's the Holy Spirit. So He comes and He alone convicts us of sin.

No preacher can bring conviction. The Holy Spirit using the preacher and the Word of God. But number two, what He does is He shows us the power of the blood of Jesus and that God loves us and Christ died for us.

See, two things are happening at once when the Holy Spirit is working. You're getting deeper convictions of, oh God, have mercy on me, help me, forgive me. I don't want to go that way.

I don't want to talk that way. I don't want that attitude in my life. And then at the same time, He doesn't leave you like that.

He says, no, but the blood has been shed. The devil will not bring you into condemnation. Christ has set you free.

So it's not like a bondage, it's a freedom. But without that, without that, you don't enjoy all that Jesus has done. The Holy Spirit is the only one that makes that real.

And lastly, He's the one that shows you that He'll be the power that will overcome sin in your life and the things you're battling with. Because brothers and sisters, let's be serious. The Holy Spirit wants to make us holy, wants to make us like Jesus.

We've reduced in America Christianity to a lifestyle. My man here on staff and I are really troubled about a man who used to come here to church and left a long time ago and moved in with some lady. And I warned him on the phone because I was trying to reach out to him back then.

And I said, excuse how I'm gonna speak now, but this is what I said to him. I said, the sex better be good because it's gonna cost you your soul. I had to reach him.

It's gonna take you to a very, very dark place for all eternity. Oh yeah, yeah, no, I know I'm wrong. I'm gonna come back.

And now we just learn that he's in that situation. Then we learn later on he's in that situation and going to church now with a woman. See that's gross darkness.

That's where the Holy Spirit knocks, knocks, knocks, knocks, knocks, no, no, no. And suddenly you don't hear him anymore. I don't wanna be there.

How many don't wanna be there? Come on, how many wanna stay sensitive to the Holy? Lift up both your hands. We wanna be sensitive to the Holy Spirit because once that thing gets in there, then you become like Asa that we heard in that masterful sermon on Sunday. Then there's no conscience left.

Then you mix religion with your sin. That's the ultimate. That's the ultimate.

So the Holy Spirit makes us sensitive, but then he reminds us that Christ died for us so we don't live in condemnation. And then he reminds us that we can do all things to Christ who strengthens us. It's not a slogan.

It's not a slogan. Listen, without the Holy Spirit working, that's just slogan. That's what, that's just cheap Christianity.

Everyone's like, I can do all things. And they're living in defeat, but they're just quoting verses. No, the Holy Spirit makes it alive, makes it real.

You know, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Come on, let's put our hands together and thank God for that. The Holy Spirit makes that alive.

So, so Pastor Cimbala, Jim Cimbala, he's hopeless without the Holy Spirit. I love that because it reminds me to don't trust in any abilities I have. It's gotta be the Holy Spirit.

For those of you who come to this church, that is a New Testament theme, and we want to emphasize it here because that's why God took a person who wasn't a strong Christian in high school or college and a

young lady who married him who wasn't trained for the ministry, wasn't trained, and put us in the ministry so God could show what he can do. Because you couldn't credit someone as ordinary as me. You couldn't credit somebody as ordinary as my wife.

It's gotta be God. It's God or bust. It's God or you can't do it.

But you're the same way. Without God, what can you do? Without the Holy Spirit working in your life, what are you gonna do? We're gonna self-destruct. But through God, we can climb mountains.

We can go through valleys through the power of the Holy Spirit. That's why in the early church, the Lord chose fishermen who had no training and no expertise and no background because who else could they depend on but the Holy Spirit. Whenever you and I have nowhere else to go but to lean on the Holy Spirit, oh, he will come through.

He will help us. He will strengthen us. So as we pray tonight, when was the last time that you asked, Father, I want more of a fullness of the Holy Spirit in my life.

I know it's gonna cost me something. It's gonna change the way I live. It's gonna convict me of some of the debris that's gathered in my life.

But I want you more than anything else. I want the Holy Spirit to come. Holy Spirit, I want you to come and make the things of Christ more real to me.

I want you to make heaven more real. See, when the Holy Spirit is working, people give up jobs and go to the mission field because they got their eyes on heaven. Without the Holy Spirit working, I'm not going nowhere.

I gotta stay here at home and enjoy my perks and my TV and my money and everything. There's no sacrifice without the Holy Spirit. Am I right, ladies and gentlemen? We're all selfish without the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit starts working, oh my goodness, there's all kinds of things. He's so good and he provides. I gotta just tell you one last one.

I was working. God was dealing with me and I was working in the business world. And I was gonna take out my future father-in-law and my current pastor, Dr. Crandall.

I was gonna take them out for lunch. They didn't know each other that well. And we were gonna meet in the city and go to lunch.

I realized I wanted to treat them, especially my future father-in-law. I wanna get on his good side and show him that I'm a liberal guy. And I realized I don't have any money and I don't have any credit cards.

How am I gonna take them for lunch? And then I just got back from Los Angeles on a business trip and I had to fill out my travel report, which they reimburse money to. But I didn't spend any money that needed to be reimbursed. But suddenly the thought came to me, why don't I fudge this report? Oh, don't be so self-righteous.

Oh my goodness. I can't even go on with this story. People going, oh, you never were tempted? How many have been tempted? Come on, be real, be real, keep it real.

So that thought came into me and I thought I'm gonna be embarrassed. What should I do? And the Lord, oh, the Holy Spirit just said, you're gonna take out your future father-in-law, two ministers with stolen money. Does not sound like a good idea.

You're gonna choke on an olive and die while you're eating. I said, no, I can't do that. Well, you know what? I'll just humble myself and tell them I'm dead broke.

And I was single, you know. I worked on the third floor, 42nd Street, between third and second. So young, so naive about so many things.

I went to the elevator bank, gonna press down. Suddenly just told me, don't take the elevator, go down the stairs. I opened the door.

I never go down the stairs. Who's gonna walk when you have an elevator, right? And I go to the first landing and then laying on the floor is \$2.20 bill. And I quickly looked around to see if there was anybody.

That's the truth before God. I reached down, I picked it up. Nobody, there was no one there.

It was more than enough because back in that day, you could eat for a little money. And I remember holding that money and I know the Holy Spirit just spoke to me. If you listen to my voice and follow my leadings, I will always provide for you.

Come on, can we thank God for that? Come on, can we thank God for that? I never walked down that stairway. I never pick up money. I never find money.

Oh, how wonderful the Holy Spirit is. I hope you know him. I hope you listen for his voice.

I hope you wanna come under his control. Do you wanna come more under his control? Because that's how people become soul winners. That's how they love the unlovely.

It's all through the Holy Spirit. Let's bow our heads, close our eyes. See, that's why I love that song so much.

Come, Holy Spirit. Oh, how we need you. Oh, how we need you.

The Father's great gift was the Son. The Son's great gift was the Holy Spirit. And all this was his little Bible teaching to encourage us to be wide open and ask the Father, Father, I want more of your Spirit in my life.

I know I'm a Christian. I know he's there. But I know I could live in a whole different way.

Oh, I know I could. I could be much more like Christ. I could have much more power over the enemy.

I could be much bolder than I am right now. And it all hangs on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. So if you're here tonight, especially if you have a real desire to be used by God, or if you're battling with some sin that just is like trying to overcome you, besetting sin or some discouragement, you just need something fresh from God.

There is a river that flows from where God is. And that river brings life wherever it goes. And that river is the Holy Spirit.

Just get out of your seat and come up here. Father God, we say yes today to the Holy Spirit. Yes to where he leads.

Yes to what he says. Yes to his convictions. Yes to his comfort, his grace, his power.

Yes to his calling on her life, Lord, that she's struggling with. But today my sister says yes to you, Lord. Yes.

She says yes. She will follow you in the way that you want her to go. She says yes.

Yes to a new spirit of prayer. Yes to more time in the word. Holy Spirit, wherever you lead us, we say yes.

Yes, yes. Digo si, señor. We say yes to you, Lord.

Make us sensitive to the wind. Let us feel the gentle impulses of the wind. To know when to talk, when to be quiet, how to love, how to share.

Rearrange our days and our plans so that we can say, we were led by the Holy Spirit of God. Every eye closed. I'm going to dismiss in prayer now.

And then I would like Pastor Burgos, Pastor Petri, Pastor Delene and I are going to just stand up here on the steps for a moment. And if you're without work, you're not working right now, you don't have a job. We just want you to make your way up here.

Even we're not going to pray for you. We just want to hug you. That's all we want to do.

We just want to hug you and encourage you. Father God, thank you for this service. Our first one in September.

Bless the kids as they go to school this week, Lord. We pray for them again. Help us to love each other more.

Spirit of God, pour out your love. Oh, we love that promise. The love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit, just give us new rivers of love for one another so we can be a blessing. Get us all home safely. Help us to make the most of the days for the times are evil.

Help us to shine like a light and speak the word of truth everywhere we go. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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