

# Setting" the Mind On" Eternity - Part 4

by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of thanksgiving and praise in obtaining the Spirit of God and experiencing a full, soul-filling, heart-ravishing outpouring of God's presence.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 100:4, Acts 2:1

**Topics:** "Thanksgiving", "Unity in Worship"

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## Description

Robert Murray M'Cheyne emphasizes the power of thanksgiving in obtaining the Spirit of God, illustrating how united praise can lead to divine blessings. He recounts the historical significance of collective worship, particularly during the day of Pentecost, and urges believers to engage in heartfelt praise to experience God's presence. M'Cheyne highlights the necessity of recognizing God's goodness and mercy, encouraging the congregation to unite in their worship and seek the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He warns that without genuine praise and a relationship with Christ, one risks eternal separation from God. Ultimately, he calls for a fervent and unified approach to worship, promising that such devotion will invite God's Spirit into their midst.

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## Transcript

compiled by greg gordon

9. Thanksgiving Obtains The Spirit

Appendix I: Various Quotes and Maxim

Chapter nine

Thanksgiving Obtains The Spirit

"God will either give you what you ask, or something far better." - Robert Murray M'Cheyne

The day here spoken of appears to have been a day of days. It seems to have been the day of Pentecost on Old Testament times - a type of all the glorious days of an outpoured Spirit that ever have been in the world - a foretaste of that glorious day when God will fulfill that amazing, soul-satisfying promise: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

My dearly beloved flock, it is my heart's desire and prayer that this very day might be such a day among us - that God would indeed open the windows of heaven, as He has done in times past, and pour down a blessing, till there be no more room to receive it.

Let us observe, then, how thanksgiving brings down the Spirit of God.

How the People were Engaged "In praising and thanking the Lord." Yea, you have their very words: "For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever." It was thus the people were engaged when the cloud came down and filled the house. They had been engaged in many other most affecting duties. The Levites had been carrying the ark from Mount Zion and placing it under the wings of the Cherubim; Solomon and all his people had been offering sacrifices, sheep and oxen, which could not be told for multitude - still no answer came from heaven.

But when the trumpeters and singers were as one praising and thanking the Lord, when they lifted up their voices, saying; "For he is good; for His mercy endureth forever" - then the windows of heaven were opened - then the cloud came down and filled the whole temple. My dear flock, I am deeply persuaded that there will be no full, soul-filling, heart-ravishing, heart-satisfying, outpouring of the Spirit of God till there be more praise and thanking the Lord, let me stir up your hearts to praise.

He is good. Believers should praise God for what He is in Himself. Those that have never seen the Lord cannot praise Him. Those who have not come to Christ have never seen the King in His beauty. An unconverted man sees no loveliness in God. He sees a beauty in the blue sky - in the glorious sun - in the green earth - in the sparkling stars - in the lily of the field; but he sees no beauty in God. He has not seen Him, neither known Him; therefore there is no melody of praise in that heart.

When a sinner is brought to Christ, he is brought to the Father. Jesus gave Himself for us, "that he might bring us to God." O! what a sight breaks in upon the soul -- the infinite, eternal, unchangeable God! I know that some of you have been brought to see this sight. Oh! praise Him, then, for what He is. Praise Him for His pure, lovely holiness that cannot bear any sin in His sight. Cry, like the angels, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." Praise Him for His infinite wisdom that he knows the end from the beginning.

In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Praise Him for His power - that all matter, all mind, is in His Hand. The heart of the king, the heart of saint and sinner, are all in His hand. Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. Praise him for His love; for God is love. Some of you have been at sea. When far out of sight of land, you have stood high on the vessel's prow and looked round and round - one vast circle of ocean without any bound. Oh! so it is to stand in Christ justified, and to behold the love of God - a vast ocean all around you without a bottom and without a shore.

Oh! praise Him for what He is. Heaven will be all praise. If you cannot praise God, you will never be there. For His mercy - for what He has done for us. The Lord has done much for me since I parted from you. We were once in the perils of waters; but the Lord saved the ship. Again and again we were in danger of plague - we nightly heard the cry of the mourner; yet no plague came near our dwelling. Again and again we were in perils of robbers - the gun of the murderous has been leveled at us; but the Lord stayed his hand.

I have been at the gates of death since we parted. No one that saw me would have believed that I could be here this day; yet he has healed our diseases and brought me back to open once more to you the unsearchable riches of Christ. I, then, have reason to praise Him; for His mercy endures forever. The Lord

has done much for you since we parted. My eyes filled with tears when I left you, for I thought He had done it in anger. I thought it was anger to me, and I thought it was anger to you; but now I see it was all love - it was all mercy to unworthy you and to unworthy me.

The Lord gave you my dear brother to care for your souls and far better than that - for to give you a man only would have been a poor gift - but He has given you His Holy Spirit. "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" Praise Him, O my people! for He is Good; for His mercy endures forever. Are there not some of you brands plucked out of the burning? You were in the burning; the pains of hell were actually getting hold on you. You had hell in your own hearts - you had a hell yawning to receive you; but the Lord snatched you from the burning.

Will you not praise Him? Are there not some of you whom I have left blind and deaf and dumb and dead? You saw no beauty in Him who is fairer than the children of men; you saw not glory in Immanuel - God manifest in flesh. But the Lord said; "Go wash in the pool of Siloam," and whereas you were blind, now you see. Oh! praise Him that has done it. In heaven, they praise God most of all for this: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Oh! have you no praise for Jesus for all His love for the Father - for the Spirit?

Some of you cannot not sing; "No man could learn that song but those that were redeemed from the earth." Some of you are worse than when I left you. You have resisted me - you have resisted my brother; and oh! worse than all you have resisted the Holy Spirit. You are prayerless yet - Christless yet. Ah! unhappy souls! unredeemed, unrenewed, remember it will be too late to learn to praise when you die. You must begin now. I will tell you what a dear friend of mine once said before dying.

She desired all the servants to be brought in; and she said very solemnly: "There's nothing but Christ between me and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Oh! if you have not Christ, there is nothing between you and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." You that will not praise Christ now, shall wail because of Him soon.

### The Manner of Their Praise

They were "as one." Their hearts were all as one heart in this exercise. There were a thousand tongues, but only one heart. Not only were their harps and cymbals and dulcimers all in tune, giving out a harmonious melody, but their hearts were all in tune. God had given them one heart, and then the blessings came down. The same was the case on the day of Pentecost; they were all with one accord in one place; they were looking to the same Lamb of God. The same thing will be the case in that day prophesied of in Psalm 133:1-3; "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for the brethren to dwell together in unity!...there God commands the blessing, even life forevermore." and this is the very thing which Jesus prayed for in that prayer which none but God could have asked, and none but God could answer; "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." And then follows the blessing; "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; and they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

Dear children of God, unite your praises. Let your hearts no more be divided. You are divided from the world by a great gulf. Soon it will be an infinite gulf; but you are united to one another, by the same Spirit - you have been chosen by the same free, sovereign love - you have been washed in the same precious blood - you have been filled by the same blessed Spirit. "Little children, love one another. He that loves is

born of God." Be one in your praises. Join in one cry; "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain; thou art worthy to open the book - thou art worthy to reign on our hearts." And oh! be fervent in praise. Lift up your voices in it - lift up your hearts in it. In heaven they wax louder and louder. John heard the sound of a great multitude, and then it was like many waters, and then it was like mighty thunders, crying; "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" I remember Edwards' remark, that it was the singing of praises that his people felt themselves most enlarged, and that then God was worshiped somewhat in the beauty of holiness. Let it be so among yourselves. Learn dearly beloved, to praise God heartily - to sing with all your heart and soul in the family and in the congregation. But, oh! remember that even your praises must be sprinkled with blood and can be acceptable to God only by Jesus Christ.

**The Effects Of Their Praise** The cloud filled the house. This cloud is the very same which hem through the Red Sea and went before them forty years in the wilderness. It was a pillar of cloud by day, to shade them from the heat; it was a pillar of fire by night, to guide Israel on their way to the promise rest; and now it came and filled the holiest of all and the holy place. Such was the wonderful effect which followed their united fervent praises. God Himself came down and filled every chamber of the house with His presence.

"This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." Now, my dear friends, we are not now to expect that God will answer our prayers or follow our praises with a pillar of cloud or a pillar of fire. These were but the shadows; now we receive the reality - the substance. If you will but unite in unanimous and heartfelt praises, then am I persuaded that God will give His Holy Spirit to fill this house - to fill every heart in the spiritual temple. How glorious this will be.

For the children of God - are there not some of you who have come to Christ, and nothing more? Guilty, weary, heavy laden, you have found rest - redemption through his blood - even the forgiveness for sins. Oh! do not stop there. Do not rest in mere forgiveness - cry for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. Forgiveness is but a means to an end. You are justified in order that you may be sanctified. Remember, without holiness you will never see the Lord; and without this indwelling Spirit, you will never be holy.

Are there not some of you groaning under a body of sin and death and crying with the apostle, "Oh! wretched man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Do you not feel the plague of your own heart? Do you not feel the power of your old nature? How many in this state lean upon themselves - trust in their resolutions - attempt, as it were by force, to put down their sins! But here is the remedy. Oh! cry for the flood-tide of God's Spirit, that He may fill every chamber of your heart - that He may renew you in the spirit of your mind.

Are there not many who are cold, worldly Christians - those who were long ago converted but have fallen sadly back under the power of the world - either its gaiety or its business, its mirth or its money - and they have got into worldly habits, deep ruts of sin? Ah! see what you need. He that created humanity in His own image at first must create you over again. You need an Almighty indwelling Comforter. Oh! it is He only who can melt your icy heart and make it flow out of love to God - who can fill you with all the fullness of God.

Are there not some of you who read the Bible but get little from it? You feel that it does not sink into your heart - it does not remain with you through the week. It is like the seed cast in the wayside, easily plucked away. Oh! it is just such an outpoured Spirit you require to hide the Word in your heart. When you write with a dry pen without any ink in it, no impression is made upon the paper. Now, ministers are the pens,

and the Spirit of God is the ink. Pray that the pen may be filled with the living ink - that the Word may remain in your heart, known and read for all - that you may be sanctified through the truth.

For the unconverted - so it was in the day of Pentecost - the Spirit came first upon the small company of disciples and then on the three thousand. You have seen the hills attracting the clouds and so drawing down the shower into the valleys - so do God's children, having their heads within the veil, obtaining the Spirit of God in fulness and dispense it to all around. You have seen some tall tree or spire catching the lightning and conveying it down into the ground - so does the fire of God's Spirit come first upon the trees of righteousness and from them descends to the dead souls around them.

A word to dead souls - keep near to God's children at such a time as this. Do not separate from them, do not mock at them, you may yet receive the grace of God through them. Dear believers, for the sake of the dead souls around you - for the sake of this great town, full of wickedness - for the sake of our land, filled with formality and hypocrisy - oh! unite in prayer and unite in praise and prove the Lord, if He will not pour out a blessing. Not for your own sakes only, but for the sake of those perishing around you, let us wrestle and pray for a fuller time of the Spirit's working than has ever been seen in Scotland yet.

The priests could not stand to minister. Before the cloud came down, no doubt the priests were all busily engaged burning incense and offering sacrifices; but when the cloud came down, they could only wonder and adore. So it ever will be when the Lord gives much of His Spirit; He will make it evident that is not the work of human beings. If He were to give only a little, then ministers would begin to think they had some hand in it; but when He fills the house, He makes it plain that man has nothing to do with it.

David Brainerd said that when God awakened his whole congregation of Indians, he stood by amazed and felt that he was as nothing - that God alone was working. Oh! it is this, dear friends, that we desire and pray for - that the Lord would send the Spirit and would Himself descend and with His almighty power and tear away the veil from your hearts, convince you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment - that Jesus himself would take His scepter and break your hearts and take all the glory - that we may cry out; "Not unto us; Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."

Appendix I:

Various Quotes and Maxims

"It is not great gifts that God blesses so much as it is great likeness to Christ." - Robert Murray M'Cheyne

"The seed of every sin known to man is in my heart."

"Live near to God, and so all things will appear to you little in comparison to eternal realities."

"If nothing else will do to sever me from my sins, Lord, send me such sore and trying calamities as shall awake me from earthly slumbers. It must always be best to be alive to Thee, whatever be the quickening instrument."

"[Suffering] brings out graces that cannot be seen in a time of health. It is the treading of the grapes that brings out the sweet juices of the vine; so it is affliction that draws forth submission, weanedness from the world, and complete rest in God. Use afflictions while you have them."

"No one ever came to Christ because they knew themselves to be of the elect. It is quite true that God has of his mere good pleasure elected some to everlasting life, but they never knew it until they came to Christ. Christ nowhere invites the elect to come to Him. The question for you is not, Am I one of the elect? But, Am I one of the human race?"

"Set not your hearts on the flowers of this world. They shall fade and die. Prize the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. He changes not! Live nearer to Christ than to any person on this earth; so that when they are taken, you may have Him to love and lean upon."

"Some of you seek for faith much in the same way as you would dig for a well. You turn the eye inward upon yourself and search amidst the depths of your polluted heart to find if faith is there; you search amid all your feelings at sermons and sacraments to see if faith is there; and still you find nothing but sin and disappointment. Learn Martha's plan. She looked full in the face of Jesus; she saw his dust-soiled feet and sullied garment, and his eye of more than human tenderness. She drank in his word: 'I am the resurrection and the life'; and in spite of all she saw and all she felt, she could not but believe. The discovery that Jesus made of his love and power, as the head of dead believers and the head of living believers, revived her fainting soul, and she cried: 'Yea, Lord, I believe.' Faith comes by hearing the voice of Jesus."

"Let your soul be filled with a heart-ravishing sense of the sweetness and excellency of Christ and all that is in Him. Let the Holy Spirit fill every chamber of your heart; and so there will be no room for folly, or the world, or Satan, or the flesh."

"Ah! believers, you are a tempted people. You are always poor and needy. And God intends it should be so, to give you constant errands to go to Jesus. Some may say, it is not good to be a believer; but ah! see to whom we can go."

"You will never find Jesus so precious, as when the world is one vast howling wilderness. Then He is like a rose blooming in the midst of the desolation, or a rock rising above the storm! Do not set your hearts on any of the flowers of this world. They shall all fade and die. Prize the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. Jesus never changes! Live nearer to Christ than to any person on this earth; so that when they are taken away, you may have Him to love and lean upon. "Yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!" (Song of Solomon 5:16)"

"Do not doubt the holy love of Jesus to your soul when he is laying a heavy hand upon you."

"What good will it do you in hell, that you knew all the sciences in the world, all the events of history, and all the busy politics of your little day ? Do you not know that your very knowledge will be turned into an instrument of torture in hell ? Oh, how will you wish in that day that you had read your newspaper less and your Bible more ; that with all your getting you had got understanding; that with all your knowledge you had known the Saviour, whom to know is life everlasting."

"We do not know the value of Christ, if we will not cleave to Him unto death!"

"Some of you seek for faith much in the same way as you would dig for a well. You turn the eye inward upon yourself and search amidst the depths of your polluted heart to find if faith is there; you search amidst all your feelings at sermons and sacraments to see if faith is there; and still you find nothing but sin and disappointment... Look full in the face of Jesus... Drink in His Word... Faith comes by hearing the voice of Jesus."

"There are many hearing me who now know well that they are not Christians because they do not love to give. To give largely and liberally, not grudging at all, requires a new heart."

"There is something inexpressibly pleasing to a justified mind to know that God has all the honor in our salvation, and we have none; to know that God's honor is not violated, but on the contrary, shines more illustrious; to know that God's law is not injured, but magnified and made honorable; to know that we are safe, and God has all the glory."

"It is a sure mark of grace to desire more."

"O Christless man! You too will hear that voice. Your soul will hear it in hell, your body will hear it in the grave; and death and hell will give up the dead which are in them. You will not hear His voice now, but you must hear it then. You will come forth, like Lazarus, and stand before God. Perhaps you would like to lie still in the grave. Oh! Let the rocks fall on me, and the mountains cover me. Perhaps you will cling to the sides of the grave, and clasp your frail coffin in your arms. Perhaps your soul would wish to lie still in hell. Oh! Let me alone! Let the burning wave go over forever, let the worm gnaw and never die. But you must come forth to the resurrection of damnation. You must rise to shame and everlasting contempt."

"It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God."

"If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me."

"Your afflictions may only prove that you are more immediately under the Father's hand. There is no time that the patient is such an object of tender interest to the surgeon, as when he is bleeding beneath his knife. So you may be sure if you are suffering from the hand of a reconciled God, that His eye is all the more bent on you."

"A believer longs after God: to come into His presence, to feel His love, to feel near to Him in secret, to feel in the crowd that he is nearer than all the creatures. Ah! dear brethren, have you ever tasted this blessedness? There is greater rest and solace to be found in the presence of God for one hour, than in an eternity of the presence of man."

"O believing brethren! What an instrument is this which God hath put into your hands! Prayer moves Him that moves the universe."

"God's children should not doubt His love when He afflicts. Christ loved Lazarus peculiarly, and yet He afflicted Him very sore. A surgeon never bends his eye so tenderly upon his patient, as when he is putting in the lancet, or probing the wound to the very bottom. And so with Christ - He bends His eye most tenderly over His own at the time He is afflicting them... A goldsmith when he casts gold into the furnace looks after it."

"My people's greatest need is my personal holiness."

"[Affliction] shows the power of Christ's blood, when it gives peace in an hour of trouble, when it can make happy in sickness, poverty, persecution and death. Do not be surprised if you suffer, but glorify God. "

"The purest joy in the world is joy in Christ Jesus. When the Spirit is poured down, His people get very near and clear views of the Lord Jesus. They eat His flesh and drink His blood. They come to a personal cleaving to the Lord. They taste that the Lord is gracious. His blood and righteousness appear infinitely perfect, full and free to their soul. They sit under His shadow with great delight... They lean on the Beloved. They find infinite strength in Him for the use of their soul -- grace for grace -- all they can need in any hour of trial and suffering to the very end."

"Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this, for your sermons last but an hour or two: your life preaches all week. If Satan can only make a covetous minister a lover of praise, of pleasure, of good eating, he has ruined your ministry. Give yourself to prayer, and get your texts, your thoughts, your words, from God."

"If you will bear the cross, it will bear you."

"It is the voice of Christ that wakens the dead soul. Jesus speaks through the Bible, through ministers, through providences. His voice can reach the dead. He quickeneth whom He will. They that hear, live."

"I know well that when Christ is nearest, Satan also is busiest."

"The Christian is a person who makes it easy for others to believe in God."

"Learn that urgency in prayer does not so much consist in vehement pleading, as in vehement believing. He that believes most the love and power of Jesus will obtain the most in prayer."

"Give yourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. If you do not pray, God will probably lay you aside from your ministry, as He did me, to teach you to pray."

"Christ frequently gives us the desires of our heart, though not at the peculiar time we desired, but a better time. "

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