

The Pursuit of the Power

(Luke 11:5-13 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; **6** For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? **7** And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. **8** I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. **9** And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. **10** For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. **11** If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he, for a fish, give him a serpent? **12** Or -- if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? **13** If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?)

The Parables of Persistence (And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; **6** For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? **7** And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. **8** I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.) William MacDonald, when explaining the passage, "In applying this illustration, we must be careful to avoid certain conclusions. It doesn't mean that God is annoyed by our persistent requests. And it doesn't suggest that the only way to get our prayers answered is to be persistent.

It does teach that if a man is willing to help a friend because of his importunity, God is much more willing to hear the cries of His children."

1. Seeing God's desire to help, we must respond in a threefold way. "**9** And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. **10** For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

So first, ask and second, seek and find. Finally, knock, and it will be opened unto you.

2. Understand God's character as you ask, seek and knock. (**11:11-13** If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he, for a fish, give him a serpent? **12** Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? **13** If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?) William MacDonald gives this explanation: "It teaches that God will never deceive us by giving us a stone when we ask for bread. Bread in those days was shaped in a round flat cake, resembling a stone. God will never mock us by giving us something inedible when we ask for food. If we ask for a fish, He will not give us a serpent, something that might destroy us. And if we ask for an egg, He will not give us a scorpion, something that would cause excruciating pain." (**Romans 8:26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.)

Giving of the Spirit "Father, give the Holy Spirit." William MacDonald shows some insight into this passage: "...willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. J. G. Bellet says, "It is significant that the gift He selects as the one we most need, and the one He most desires to give, is the Holy Spirit." When Jesus spoke these words, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given (John 7:39). We should not pray today for the Holy Spirit to be given to us as an indwelling Person because He comes to indwell us at the time of our conversion (Rom. 8:9b; Eph. 1:13, 14).

But, it is certainly proper and necessary for us to pray for the Holy Spirit in other ways. We should

pray that we will be teachable by the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit will guide us, and that His power will be poured out on us in all our service for Christ.

It is quite possible that when Jesus taught the disciples to ask for the Holy Spirit, He was referring to the power of the Spirit enabling them to live the other-worldly type of discipleship He had taught in the preceding chapters. By this time, they probably felt how utterly impossible it was to meet the tests of discipleship in their strength. This is, of course, true. But nevertheless, the Holy Spirit is the power that enables one to live a Christian life. So, Jesus pictured God as anxious to give this power to those who ask.

In the original Greek, verse 13 does not say that God will give the Holy Spirit, but rather He will “give Holy Spirit” (without the article). Professor H. B. Swete pointed out that when the article is present, it refers to the Person Himself, but when the article is absent, it refers to His gifts or operations on our behalf. So, this passage is not a prayer for the Person of the Holy Spirit but for His ministries in our lives. This is further borne out by the parallel passage in Matthew 7:11, which reads, “...how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

Matthew 12:28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

The Promise (**John 7:37-39** In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) William MacDonald gives the ceremonial significance to this, “Though not mentioned in the OT, the Jews had a ceremony of carrying water from the Pool of Siloam and pouring it into a silver basin by the altar of burnt offering for each of the first seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles. On the eighth day, this was not done, which made Christ’s offer of the water of eternal life even more startling. The Jewish people had gone through this religious observance, yet their hearts were not satisfied because they had not truly understood the deep meaning of the feast. Just before they departed for their homes.”

The giver of this baptism. (**Matthew 3:11-12** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: **12** Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.)

The purpose of the gift is to indwell the believer with *The Spirit of Christ: The Indwelling Spirit*.

John 14:16-17 And I will pray for the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; **17** Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you.

“He shall be in you” is the crown of God’s redeeming work. So, Christ is telling His disciples that though He will depart from them bodily, he will send them a more incredible blessing even than His bodily presence, which is His Spirit dwelling in them and working through them. The Spirit would lead and help and abide in them and prepares the Christian for the receiving of The Father, Christ and Himself “the Spirit.”

The Father gives us a twofold revelation of Himself. First, through His Son, The Father’s Holy image is made known to us (**John 1:18** No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.) We become like Him.

Second, through the indwelling of the Spirit in the saints. The action of the Spirit in our lives is seen through the means of faith in His direction to our lives. The Spirit, with the truth of God's Word, is our comforter, teacher and "convictor." Through the indwelling Spirit, the sons of God are led on a correct path of patterning the Father in our sonship. The Spirit opens our eyes to Scripture's relevance and application to our lives. The Holy Spirit seals the acceptance of the Father to Christ.

Christian, the Holy Spirit isn't just upon you; He is in you, and The Godhead is hidden in you; you are indwelled by the Holy Spirit, providing the presence of God in you.

The realization of this glory is only found through submission (**John 14:15-17** If ye love me, keep my commandments. **16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; **17** Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. **Acts 5:32** And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.)

The Spirit of Christ: The Spirit given to the Obedient

John 14:15-17 If ye love me, keep my commandments. **16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; **17** Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you. **Acts 5:32** And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

The verses noted must be understood, otherwise confusion may enter because some look at the promises as impossible because they believe obedience is impossible without the Holy Spirit. So, how could God make a prerequisite to receiving the Spirit with something that is only possible with the Spirit? The answer is evident when you understand the preparatory work of the Spirit. In the Old Testament, we see the Holy Spirit's work preparing the way for higher revelation of God as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the disciples He worked as the Spirit of conversion and faith. The disciples were being prepared for something higher— the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, "communicating power from on high, the experience of His full salvation.

The question is now— in the dispensation of grace with the Spirit dwelling within them— what, if anything, corresponds with the twofold work of the Spirit? The preparation of the Spirit is still working even though His presence dwells within us. Every Christian has experienced the Spirit's preparatory work of conversion through faith. Every Christian has received the preparatory or elementary work to make them obedient as "they yield obedience to this elementary work, the keeping of God's commandments, 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 shall give you another Comforter.'" (pg. 47).

For all beings in the universe, obedience was the means of relationship established, and only through maintaining that obedience a deeper fellowship will take place, and admission will be given to a deep experience with the Divine Being in His love and 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 to entering the Divine Presence."

Let's look at Christ as the testament of this truth. Christ, after a life of obedience, was called in His 30th year to a public confirmation. The fulfilling of Jesus in all righteousness (**Matthew 3:13-17** Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. **14** But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? **15** And Jesus answering said unto him, suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. **16** And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were

opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: **17** And lo a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.)

The word of entire consecration, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” The Holy Spirit came because of Christ’s obedience. Obedience came through the things He suffered (**Hebrews 5:8** Though he were a Son yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.) Through the obedience Christ became the giver of what He possessed to the Church (**Acts 2:33** Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.)

“Christ outward coming in the flesh was the preparation for His inward coming in the Spirit to fulfill the promise of Divine indwelling. The outward coming appealed to the soul, with its mind and feeling, and affected, 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 in a tender listening to the voice of conscience and a faithful effort to keep the commands of Christ, that we prove our love to Him, that the heart will prepare for the fullness of the Spirit. Our attainment may fall short of our aims, we may have to mourn that we would we do not if the Master sees the wholehearted surrender to His will and faithful obedience to what we already have of the leadings of His Spirit, we may be sure that the full gift will not withhold.” (pg. 47-48).

The Baptism of the Spirit follows obedience. Look at the pattern of Christ’s first candidates for the baptism of the Spirit. First, they were attached to Christ to be personally taught by Christ that only through a life of total surrender of all for Him. He connected himself to them by His position of being their Teacher and Guide. He told them to forsake all and follow Him. “It is feared that the Church has not given this word of obedience the proper 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 the needs be of sinning, with the natural reluctance of the flesh to accept a high standard of holiness, have been the cause.” (pg. 48)

We chase the fullness of the Spirit in many cases to receive what has already been given—the power of obedience, but *all* Christians are given that power. (**Romans 6:11, 14, 16-19** Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. **14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. **16** Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? **17** But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. **18** Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. **19** I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.)

“Obedience is the lower platform, 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.” (pg. 48) Our conscious enlightenment to truth leads us to walk worthy of the Lord in all truth, the passageway into full life in the Spirit. Thus, we run to the full knowledge of the abiding presence of the Lord in us and His working through us.

Obedience looks for the fullness of the Spirit. The gift to the Church was to do the work of Christ with the knowledge of the fullness of the Spirit. Yes, the spirit of the church indeed is willing, but our flesh is weak.

“Afresh, I surrender myself to Thee for this. In depths of my soul, thou see there is but one desire, that Thy will should be done in me as in Heaven. To every reproof of conscience I bow very low. To every moving of the Spirit, I would yield 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 there may be my life. Amen.” (pg. 49-50).

Illustration of the tabernacle (**Exodus 25:9** According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.) In the last two chapters in Exodus, we see the phrase that all had been made as the Lord commanded. The throne of God, or the Ark of the Covenant, where His presence fell had in its heart the Ten Commandments. “In the new Spirit, where God writes His law, and where it is kept, there the Lord reveals His immediate Presence.” (pg. 51).

The Israelites had to sacrifice and dedicate much time to the preparation of the presence of God in the tabernacle/temple. So must we—in order to have the reality of the presence of God in our life—obey, through surrender, the direction of the Spirit in our lives. (**2 Corinthians 1:12** For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.) (pg. 51)