

Articles and Sermons :: God Gives The Spirit As We Ask -murray**God Gives The Spirit As We Ask -murray - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/4/14 14:07****God Gives The Spirit As We Ask***by Andrew Murray*

"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?" (Luke 11:13).

Christ had just said, "Ask, and it shall be given" (v. 9). God's giving is inseparably connected with our asking. He applies this especially to the Holy Spirit. As surely as a father on earth gives bread to his child, God gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

The whole ministration of the Spirit is ruled by the one great law: God must give, we must ask. When the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost with a flow that never ceases, it was in answer to prayer. The inflow of the Spirit into the believer's heart and His outflow in the rivers of living water ever still depend upon the law: "Ask, and it shall be given..."

We need to apprehend the exalted place that prayer occupies in God's plan of redemption. We shall perhaps nowhere see this more clearly than in the first half of the Acts of the Apostles. The story of the birth of the Church in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and of the first freshness of its heavenly life in the power of that Spirit, will teach us how prayer on earth is the true measure of the presence of the Spirit of heaven.

We begin with the well-known words of Acts 1:14: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Then there follows: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.... And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.... And the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:1, 4, 41).

The great work of redemption had been accomplished. The Holy Spirit had been promised by Christ "not many days hence." Christ had sat down on His throne and received the Spirit from the Father. But all this was not enough. One thing more was needed: the ten days' united supplication of the disciples.

It was intense, continued prayer that prepared the disciples' hearts, that opened the windows of heaven, that brought down the promised gift. The power of the Spirit could not be given without Christ sitting on the throne, and it could not descend without the disciples on the footstool of the throne. For all the ages the law is laid down here at the birth of the Church that whatever else may be found on earth, the power of the Spirit must be prayed down from heaven. The measure of believing, continued prayer will be the measure of the Spirit's working in the Church. Direct, definite, determined prayer is what we need!

See how this is confirmed in chapter four. Peter and John had been brought before the Council and threatened with punishment. When they returned to their brethren and reported what had been said to them, "they lifted up their voice to God with one accord," and prayed for boldness to speak the Word. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken... and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.... And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all" (vv. 24, 31-33).

It is as if the story of Pentecost is repeated to imprint on the heart of the Church so it could not be erased that it is prayer that lies at the root of the spiritual life and power of the Church! The measure of God's giving the Spirit is our asking. He gives as a father to him who asks as a child.

In the sixth chapter of Acts we find that when murmurings arose as to the neglect of the Grecian Jews in the distribution of alms, the apostles proposed the appointment of deacons to serve the tables. They said, "We will give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word."

A work like ministering to the poor ought not to hinder the spiritual life, yet the apostles felt it would hinder them in their

r giving themselves to the ministry of prayer and the Word. This teaches that maintaining the spirit of prayer is not enough for those who are the leaders of the Church. The apostles, as the ministers of the Word, felt the need of being free from other duties, that they might give themselves to much prayer. This was necessary in order to keep up the communication with the King on the throne and to keep the heavenly world clear and fresh; to draw down the power and blessing of that world, not only for maintaining their own spiritual life, but for those around them; and to continually receive instruction and empowerment for the great work to be done.

James writes: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction..." (Jas. 1:27). If any work was a sacred one, it was that of caring for these Grecian widows. Yet even such duties might interfere with the special calling to give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

While some, like the deacons, had especially to care for serving the tables and ministering the alms of the Church here on earth, others had to be set free for that steadfast continuance in prayer which would uninterruptedly secure the down flow of the powers of the heavenly world. The minister of Christ is set apart to give himself as much to prayer as to the ministry of the Word. In faithful obedience to this law is the secret of the Church's power and success. As before, so after Pentecost the apostles were men given up to prayer.

Re: God Gives The Spirit As We Ask -murray - posted by Repur (), on: 2008/4/14 19:21

Thank you for this encouraging word. Of late I have been praying earnestly for a greater measure of the Spirit in my own life, and this message is a tremendous encouragement to me as I press on the upward way.

Quote:

The measure of God's giving the Spirit is our asking. He gives as a father to him who asks as a child.

How amazing it is that we serve a God far beyond our ability to understand in the slightest, yet He condescends to be our Father!