

(Walking in the Spirit) 12. THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

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Transcript

"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." Rom. 8: 26.

"Praying in the Holy Ghost." Jude, verse 20. The mystery of prayer! There is nothing like it in the natural universe. A higher and a lower being in perfect communion. A familiar intercourse, yet both as widely distinct as the finite is from the infinite. More wonderful even than that we should be able to hold converse with the insect that crawls beneath our feet, or the bird that flutters on the branches at our window! Marvelous bond of prayer which can span the gulf between the Creator and the creature, the infinite God and the humblest and most illiterate child!

How has this been accomplished? The three Divine persons have all cooperated in opening the gates of prayer. The Father waits at the throne of grace as the hearer of prayer; the Son has come to reveal the Father, and has returned to be our Advocate in His presence. And the Holy Spirit has come still nearer, as the other Advocate in the heart, to teach us the heavenly secret of prayer, and send up our petitions in the true spirit to the hands of our heavenly Intercessor. It is to this ministry we are to speak now.

The very name given to the Holy Ghost, literally means the Advocate, and the chief business of the one Advocate is to prepare our cause in the office, and the other to plead it before the Judge. We have the whole Trinity in our behalf. The Holy Spirit prepares our case, the Lord Jesus presents it, and the Judge is our Father. What an infinite light, and what an unspeakable comfort this sheds on the subject of prayer!

Our need of this Advocate is referred to in our text very impressively: "We know not what to pray for as we ought." We are often ignorant of the subjects for which we ought to pray; and often, when we know our needs, we know not how rightly to present them. There is much expressed in these words. We are often deeply ignorant of our truest needs, and the things we wish most for are not the things we most require. Our minds are blinded by prejudice and passion; the things we would sometimes ask for we shall afterwards find would have been only an injury. Besides, we know not the future, and cannot, intelligently, anticipate the needs and dangers against which we should pray, while a thousand unseen elements of peril continually surround us and need a wiser forethought and insight than our own to guard against.

And often "we know not how to pray as we ought." Prayer is a high art, and must be divinely taught. We would not rashly send a crude and unprepared case before an earthly tribunal, and he is greatly mistaken

who thinks that the thoughtless and random dashes of human impulse, or even sincere earthly desires, are all accepted as prayer. Many "receive not because they ask amiss." If we regard iniquity in our hearts the Lord will not hear us. We must ask in faith, nothing doubting. These and other qualities must be taught and impelled by the Holy Spirit. "We know not how to pray as we ought."

The right motive which seeks supremely the glory of God, the right spirit recognizing submissively and joyfully His sovereign will, the deep and sincere desire, the faith which dares to ask as largely as the measure of the Father\

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