

Knowing the Spirit

by Andrew Murray

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing the Spirit and living in dependence on His teaching and guidance, in order to experience the fullness of God's presence and power in our lives.

Scripture: John 14:17, John 16:13, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:14, Romans 8:26-27, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 1:17-18, 1 John 4:13

Topics: "Knowing the Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Knowledge"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the significance of truly knowing the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth and dwells within believers. He explains that spiritual knowledge is essential for experiencing the fullness of God's grace, and that understanding the Spirit's presence and work is crucial for a vibrant faith. Murray encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit through prayer, obedience, and studying the Word of God, asserting that true knowledge of the Spirit leads to assurance and transformation. He highlights that the Spirit's indwelling is evidenced by a life of faith and obedience, and that knowing the Spirit is foundational for knowing Christ and the Father. Ultimately, Murray calls for a complete surrender to the Holy Spirit to fully experience His guidance and power in our lives.

Transcript

The Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: Ye know Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you.'-John 14: 17.

'Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' -1 Cor. 3:16.

THE value of knowledge, that is, true spiritual knowledge, in the life of faith can hardly be exaggerated. Just as a man on earth is none the richer for an inheritance that comes to him, or a treasure in his field, as long as he does not know of it, or does not know how to get possessed of it, and to use it,-so the gifts of God's Grace cannot bring their full blessing until we know and, in knowing, truly apprehend and possess them. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; it is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, his Lord, for which the believer is willing to count all things but loss. It is owing to the want of a true knowledge of what God in Christ has prepared for us that the lives of believers are so low and feeble. The prayer Paul offered for the Ephesians--that the Father would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of their heart being enlightened, that they might know the hope of their calling, and the riches of the inheritance, and the exceeding goodness of the power working in them-- is one we never can pray enough, whether for ourselves or for others. But of what special

importance it is that we should know the Teacher through whom all the other knowledge is to come! The Father has given each one of His children not only Christ, who is the truth, the reality of all life and grace, but the Holy Spirit, who is the very Spirit of Christ and the Truth. ' We received the Spirit, which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us by God.'

But now comes the important question, How do we know when it is the Spirit that is teaching us? If our knowledge of Divine things is to be to us a certainty and a comfort, we must know the Teacher Himself. It is only knowing Him that will be to us the full evidence that what we count our spiritual knowledge is no deception. Our blessed Lord meets this question, with all the solemn issues depending upon it, by assuring us that we shall know the Spirit. When a messenger comes to tell of a king, when a witness gives a testimony for his friend, neither speaks of himself. And yet, without doing so, both the messenger and the witness, in the very fact of giving their evidence, draw our attention to themselves, and claim our recognition of their presence and trustworthiness. And just so the Holy Spirit, when He testifies of Christ and glorifies Him, must be known and acknowledged in His Divine commission and presence. It is only thus that we can have the assurance that the knowledge we receive is indeed of God, and not what our human reason has gathered from the Word of God. To know the King's seal is the only safeguard against a counterfeit image. To know the Spirit is the Divine foundation of certainty.

And how now can the Spirit thus be known ? Jesus says: 'Ye know Him, for He abideth with you, and shall be in you.' The abiding indwelling of the Spirit is the condition of knowing Him. His presence will be self-evidencing. As we allow Him to dwell in us, as we give Him full possession in faith and obedience, and allow Him to testify of Jesus as Lord, He will bring His credentials: He will prove Himself to be the Spirit of God. 'It is the Spirit beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.' It is because the presence of the Spirit as the indwelling teacher of every believer is so little known and recognised in the Church, and because, as the result of this, the workings of the Spirit are few and feeble, that there is so much difficulty and doubt, so much fear and hesitation about the recognition of the witness of the Spirit. As the truth and experience of the indwelling of the Spirit is restored among God's people, and the Spirit is free again to work in power among us, His blessed presence will be its own sufficient proof : we shall indeed know Him. Ye know Him, for He shall be in you."

But meanwhile, as long as His presence is so little recognised, and His working straitened, how is He now to be known ? To this question the answer is very simple. To every one who honestly desires, not only to know that he has the Spirit, but to know Him in His person, and as a personal possession and Teacher, we say: Study the teaching of the Word in regard to the Spirit. Be not content with the teaching of the Church or of men about the Spirit, but go to the Word. Be not content with your ordinary 'reading of the Word, or what you already know of its doctrines. If you are in earnest to know the Spirit, go and search the Word specially with this view, as one thirsting to drink deeply of the water of life. Gather together all the Word says of the Spirit, His indwelling and His work, and hide it in your heart. Be determined to accept of nothing but what the Word teaches, but also to accept heartily of all it teaches.

But study the Word in dependence on the Spirit's teaching. If you study it with your human wisdom, your study of it may only confirm you in your mistaken views. If you are a child of God, you have the Holy Spirit to teach you, even though you do not yet know how He works in you. Ask the Father to work through Him in you, and to make the Word life and light in you. If, in the spirit of humility, and trusting in God's guidance, you submit heartily to the Word, You will find the promise surely fulfilled: you will be taught of God. We have more than once spoken of the progress from the outward to the inward: be whole-hearted in giving up all your thoughts and men's thoughts as you accept the Word; ask God to reveal in you by His

Spirit His thoughts concerning His Spirit: He will assuredly do so.

And what will be the chief marks to be found in the Word by which the Spirit in us can be known? They will be chiefly two. The first will be more external, referring to the work He does. The second more in the inner life, in the dispositions which He seeks in those in whom He dwells.

We have just heard how Jesus spoke of a loving obedience as the condition of the Spirit's coming. Obedience is the abiding mark of His presence. Jesus gave Him as a Teacher and Guide. All Scripture speaks of His work as demanding the surrender of the whole life. 'If by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live; for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.' 'Your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost: glorify God therefore in your body.' 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.' 'We are changed into the same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Words like these define very distinctly the operations of the Spirit. As God is first known in His works, so with the Spirit. He reveals God's will, Christ doing that will, - and calling us to follow Him in it. As the believer surrenders himself to a life-in the Spirit, cordially consents that the leading of the Spirit, the mortifying of the flesh, the obedience to the rule of Christ, without limit or exception, shall be what he gives himself up to, and as he waits on the Spirit to work all this, he will find and know the Spirit working in him. It is as we simply make the aim of the Holy Spirit our aim, and give up ourselves entirely to what He is to come and work, that we are prepared to know Him as dwelling in us. As we are led by Him to obey God even as Christ did, it will be the Spirit Himself, bearing witness with our spirit, that He dwells in us.

We shall also know Him, and that still more certainly and intimately, as we not only yield ourselves to that life He works, but as we study the personal relation in which a believer stands to Him, and the way in which His working may most fully be experienced. The habit of soul the Spirit desires is contained in the one word-faith. Faith has ever to do with the Invisible, with what appears to man most unlikely. When the Divine appeared in Jesus, in what a lowly form was it hidden ! Thirty years, He lived in Nazareth, and they had seen nothing in Him but the son of a carpenter. It was only with His baptism that His Divine Sonship came into complete and perfect consciousness. Even to His disciples His Divine glory was often hidden. How much more when the Life of God enters the depths of our sinful being, will it be matter of faith to recognize it! Let us meet the Spirit in holy, humble faith. Let us not be content just to know that the Spirit is in us: that will profit us but little. Let us cultivate the habit, in each -religious exercise, of bowing reverently in silence before God, to give the Spirit, the recognition that is His due, and keep down the will of the flesh that is so ready with its service of God. Let us wait on the Spirit in deep dependence. Let us have a season of quiet meditation, in which we enter the inner temple of our heart, to see that all there is indeed surrendered to the Spirit, and then bow before the Father to ask and expect from Him the mighty working of the Holy Spirit. However little we see or feel, let us believe. The Divine is always first known by believing. As we continue believing, we shall be prepared to know and to see.

There is no way of knowing a fruit but by tasting it There is no way of knowing the light but by being in it and using it. There is no way of knowing a person but by intercourse with him. There is no way of knowing the Holy Spirit but by possessing Him, and being possessed of Him. To live in the Spirit is the only way to know the Spirit. To have Him in us, doing His work, giving us His fellowship, and guiding our whole life, this is the path the Master opens when He says: 'Ye know Him, for He shall be in you.'

Believer! for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus Paul counted all things but loss. Shall we not do so too ? Shall we not, to know the glorified Christ through the Spirit, give up everything? Oh, let us think of it! the Father hath sent the Spirit that we might fully share in the glory of the glorified Christ! Shall we not

give ourselves up to have Him in us, to let Him have all in us, that we may fully know Him, through whom alone we can know the Son and the Father ? Let us even now yield ourselves to the full to the indwelling and teaching of the Blessed Spirit whom the Son hath given us from the Father.

Blessed Father! who hast, in the name of Christ, sent us Thy Holy Spirit, graciously hear my prayer, and grant that I may know Him indeed by having Him within me. May His witness to Jesus be divinely clear and mighty, may His leading and sanctifying be in such holy power, may His indwelling in my spirit be in such Truth and Life, that the consciousness of Him as my Life may be as simple and sure as of my natural life, As the light is the sufficient witness to the sun, may His light be its own witness to the, presence of Jesus.

And lead me, O my Father, in knowing Him to know aright the mystery of Thy Love in giving Him within. May I understand how it was not enough to Thee to work in me by Thy secret, unknown, Almighty Power, nor even to work through Him who came to the earth to reveal Thee. Thy Son had something more, and better still, for us the Spirit, the Blessed Third in the Godhead, was sent, that Thy Personal Presence, the most intimate union and unbroken fellowship with Thee, might be my portion. The Holy Spirit, Thy very Life and Self, has come to be now the life of my very self, and so take me wholly for Thine own.

O my God, do teach me and all Thy people to know Thy Spirit. Not only to know that He is in us, not only to know somewhat of His working, but to know Him as in His very person He reveals and glorifies the Son, and in Him Thee the Father, Amen.

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