

Twenty-Fifth Lesson. 'At That Day;' Or, the Holy Spirit and Prayer

by Andrew Murray

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living in the Spirit and abiding in Christ in order to pray in the Name of Christ and receive the full fruit and power of the accomplished redemption.

Topics: "The Holy Spirit", "Power Of Prayer"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the transformative power of prayer through the Holy Spirit, highlighting three stages of prayer life: the initial childlike trust, the struggle for growth, and the mature relationship with God as friends of Christ. He explains that the coming of the Holy Spirit marks a new epoch in prayer, enabling believers to ask in Jesus' name with the assurance of receiving, thus filling their joy. Murray stresses that true prayer is rooted in living in the Spirit and abiding in Christ, which empowers believers to access the Father directly. He calls for a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in prayer, urging believers to yield themselves to His leading for a life of continuous prayer. Ultimately, he concludes that the fullness of joy in prayer comes from asking in the name of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

'In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask in my Name: and I say not, that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you.'--John xvi. 23-26.

'Praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God.'--JUDE 20, 21.

THE words of John (I John ii. 12-14) to little children, to young men, and to fathers suggest the thought that there often are in the Christian life three great stages of experience. The first, that of the new-born child, with the assurance and the joy of forgiveness. The second, the transition stage of struggle and growth in knowledge and strength: young men growing strong, God's word doing its work in them and giving them victory over the Evil One. And then the final stage of maturity and ripeness: the Fathers, who have entered deeply into the knowledge and fellowship of the Eternal One.

In Christ's teaching on prayer there appear to be three stages in the prayer-life, somewhat analogous. In the Sermon on the Mount we have the initial stage: His teaching is all comprised in one word, Father. Pray

to your Father, your Father sees, hears, knows, and will reward: how much more than any earthly father! Only be childlike and trustful. Then comes later on something like the transition stage of conflict and conquest, in words like these: 'This sort goeth not out but by fasting and prayer;' 'Shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him?' And then we have in the parting words, a higher stage. The children have become men: they are now the Master's friends, from whom He has no secrets, to whom He says, 'All things that I heard from my Father I made known unto you;' and to whom, in the oft-repeated 'whatsoever ye will,' He hands over the keys of the kingdom. Now the time has come for the power of prayer in His Name to be proved.

The contrast between this final stage and the previous preparatory ones our Saviour marks most distinctly in the words we are to meditate on: 'Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name;' 'At that day ye shall ask in my Name. ' We know what 'at that day' means. It is the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The great work Christ was to do on the cross, the mighty power and the complete victory to be manifested in His resurrection and ascension, were to issue in the coming down from heaven, as never before, of the glory of God to dwell in men. The Spirit of the glorified Jesus was to come and be the life of His disciples. And one of the marks of that wonderful spirit-dispensation was to be a power in prayer hitherto unknown--prayer in the Name of Jesus, asking and obtaining whatsoever they would, is to be the manifestation of the reality of the Spirit's indwelling.

To understand how the coming of the Holy Spirit was indeed to commence a new epoch in the prayer-world, we must remember who He is, what His work, and what the significance of His not being given until Jesus was glorified. It is in the Spirit that God exists, for He is Spirit. It is in the Spirit that the Son was begotten of the Father: it is in the fellowship of the Spirit that the Father and the Son are one. The eternal never-ceasing giving to the Son which is the Father's prerogative and the eternal asking and receiving which is the Son's right and blessedness--it is through the Spirit that this communion of life and love is maintained. It has been so from all eternity. It is so specially now, when the Son as Mediator ever liveth to pray. The great work which Jesus began on earth of reconciling in His own body God and man, He carries on in heaven. To accomplish this He took up into His own person the conflict between God's righteousness and our sin. On the cross He once for all ended the struggle in His own body. And then He ascended to heaven, that thence He might in each member of His body carry out the deliverance and manifest the victory He had obtained. It is to do this that He ever liveth to pray; in His unceasing intercession He places Himself in living fellowship with the unceasing prayer of His redeemed ones. Or rather, it is His unceasing intercession which shows itself in their prayers, and gives them a power they never had before.

And He does this through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, was not (John vii. 39), could not be, until He had been glorified. This gift of the Father was something distinctively new, entirely different from what Old Testament saints had known. The work that the blood effected in heaven when Christ entered within the veil, was something so true and new, the redemption of our human nature into fellowship with His resurrection-power and His exaltation-glory was so intensely real, the taking up of our humanity in Christ into the life of the Three-One God was an event of such inconceivable significance, that the Holy Spirit, who had to come from Christ's exalted humanity to testify in our hearts of what Christ had accomplished, was indeed no longer only what He had been in the Old Testament. It was literally true 'the Holy Spirit was not yet, for Christ was not yet glorified.' He came now first as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus. Even as the Son, who was from eternity God, had entered upon a new existence as man, and returned to heaven with what He had not before, so the Blessed Spirit, whom the Son, on His ascension,

received from the Father (Acts ii. 33) into His glorified humanity, came to us with a new life, which He had not previously to communicate. Under the Old Testament He was invoked as the Spirit of God: at Pentecost He descended as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, bringing down and communicating to us the full fruit and power of the accomplished redemption.

It is in the intercession of Christ that the continued efficacy and application of His redemption is maintained. And it is through the Holy Spirit descending from Christ to us that we are drawn up into the great stream of His ever-ascending prayers. The Spirit prays for us without words: in the depths of a heart where even thoughts are at times formless, the Spirit takes us up into the wonderful flow of the life of the Three-One God. Through the Spirit, Christ's prayers become ours, and ours are made His: we ask what we will, and it is given to us. We then understand from experience, 'Hitherto ye have not asked in my Name. At that day ye shall ask in my Name.'

Brother! what we need to pray in the Name of Christ, to ask that we may receive that our joy may be full, is the baptism of this Holy Ghost. This is more than the Spirit of God under the Old Testament. This is more than the Spirit of conversion and regeneration the disciples had before Pentecost. This is more than the Spirit with a measure of His influence and working. This is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus in His exaltation-power, coming on us as the Spirit of the indwelling Jesus, revealing the Son and the Father within. (John xiv. 16-23.) It is when this Spirit is the Spirit not of our hours of prayer, but of our whole life and walk, when this Spirit glorifies Jesus in us by revealing the completeness of His work, and making us wholly one with Him and like Him, that we can pray in His Name, because we are in very deed one with Him. Then it is that we have that immediateness of access to the Father of which Jesus says, 'I say not that I will pray the Father for you.' Oh! we need to understand and believe that to be filled with this, the Spirit of the glorified One, is the one need of God's believing people. Then shall we realize what it is, 'with all prayer and supplication to be praying at all seasons in the Spirit,' and what it is, 'praying in the Holy Ghost, to keep ourselves in the love of God.' 'At that day ye shall ask in my Name.'

And so once again the lesson comes: What our prayer avails, depends upon what we are and what our life is. It is living in the Name of Christ that is the secret of praying in the Name of Christ; living in the Spirit that fits for praying in the Spirit. It is abiding in Christ that gives the right and power to ask what we will: the extent of the abiding is the exact measure of the power in prayer. It is the Spirit dwelling within us that prays, not in words and thoughts always, but in a breathing and a being deeper than utterance. Just so much as there is of Christ's Spirit in us, is there real prayer. Our lives, our lives, O let our lives be full of Christ, and full of His Spirit, and the wonderfully unlimited promises to our prayer will no longer appear strange. 'Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask in my Name. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my Name, He will give it you.'

'LORD , TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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O my God! in holy awe I bow before Thee, the Three in One. Again I have seen how the mystery of prayer is the mystery of the Holy Trinity. I adore the Father who ever hears, and the Son who ever lives to pray, and the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, to lift us up into the fellowship of that ever-blessed, never-ceasing asking and receiving. I bow, my God, in adoring worship, before the infinite condescension that thus, through the Holy Spirit, takes us and our prayers into the Divine Life, and its

fellowship of love.

O my Blessed Lord Jesus! Teach me to understand Thy lesson, that it is the indwelling Spirit, streaming from Thee, uniting to Thee, who is the Spirit of prayer. Teach me what it is as an empty, wholly consecrated vessel, to yield myself to His being my life. Teach me to honour and trust Him, as a living Person, to lead my life and my prayer. Teach me specially in prayer to wait in holy silence, and give Him place to breathe within me His unutterable intercession. And teach me that through Him it is possible to pray without ceasing, and to pray without failing, because He makes me partaker of the never-ceasing and never-failing intercession in which Thou, the Son, dost appear before the Father. Yea, Lord, fulfil in me Thy promise, At that day ye shall ask in my Name. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, that will He give.' Amen.

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