

An Occasional God

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of receiving from God and living in dependence on Him, rather than relying on our own strength and self-sufficiency.

Duration: 25:59

Scripture: Luke 12:11

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor shares a heartwarming story about a three-year-old girl who asked God for a gift and then unexpectedly played the piano beautifully without any prior training. The pastor emphasizes the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom, especially in times of trial or persecution. He quotes a verse from Luke where Jesus assures his disciples that the Holy Spirit will teach them what to say when they are brought before authorities. The pastor also highlights the significance of having the Spirit of God working in us, rather than just mechanically following religious practices.

Transcript

So I want to say something for the folks going to Rwanda, but I want to just set up the stage so we can pray for ourselves. We prayed last week for the Holy Spirit, and the most unusual thing here happened Sunday. Some of you were involved in it, so you didn't see it, but this group was here, the Collingsworth family, and the father got up and he sang.

So there was once a girl who was three years old, and she was in a church meeting in Ohio, and she heard a preacher preach and say, there was once a king who asked God, God said to him, ask anything and I'll give it to you. That king's name was Solomon, and God granted him, what gift, do you remember? Wisdom, very good. So this little three-year-old girl went home, and she got up in her room, and she said, God, and she started holding up her fingers, God, can you give me a gift, just like you gave that king? Would you give me a gift? A week or so later, she was listening to her sister practice the piano, and the sister got off the piano, and this little three-year-old came, jumped on the piano stool, her feet dangled down, couldn't reach anything, and started to just play the song.

The mother, thinking it was her older sister, came in the room and said, what, what are you doing? Oh, I'm just playing. But who taught you to do that? Who taught you to move your hands like that? Well, no one, I just felt if my sister could play it, I could play it, too. His wife is behind there, and that's who he was talking about, his wife.

He says, now, she has this gift from God, but not only can her fingers move very quickly, and she's got tremendous, what's the word, Freddie, when someone has, technique, is it called? Technique, her technique is exceptional. So he says, in the last year or so, she had the privilege of recording with the Prague Symphony the song, How Great Thou Art. He steps back, the kids step back, and it's just her, and she begins to play, and I'm sitting over there, and about a third of the way through the song, we knew something was happening here.

Nobody's singing, nobody's talking, but I saw this with my own eyes. And she's playing, and it's building, and I said to Marcia, she'll witness this, and I said to Feola, look at her face, because she was playing here, and I remember when I heard her last year, I could see her face. You couldn't because you have a side view and a screen.

She's playing like she could care less about anyone there. She's just playing to the Lord, and her face, I can't express to you, it was so beautiful, am I right? She gets about 2 1/3 of the way through the song, and suddenly, as if somebody invisible walked out here, and said, congregation, I all want you to stand at the count of three, and went one, two, three, stand. Everybody stood together with no one saying a word.

I didn't stand. I was tired, and I was watching, and I opened my eyes. My heart almost jumped out of my chest because everybody, am I right? Marcia jumped to her feet.

No one told her, no one told Feola to, with their hands up, and began to praise God. Everybody jumped up at once. We were all just praising God.

We got lost praising God. By the time it ended, the family was crying. She was crying.

We were all crying, worshiping God, and when it ended, this is the truth. Marcia will bear witness to this. It was right around the time we had agreed, well, look, play, and sing, and minister, and then at some point, I have to take the offering.

I gotta go out there and take the offering. As everyone's just lost praising God, nobody would stop the clapping. Nobody would stop praising God.

Everyone's praising God, and praising God, and praising God. Nobody will stop praising God. Suddenly, I see him walk out, and I went, oh, no.

He's gonna call me out. This is the point. It was like an hour they had been singing.

He's gonna call me. I don't wanna go out there. That's not the right thing to do.

What they need to do is sing that song, I Gotta Get to Jesus. They gotta sing that song right now. That's what I'm saying in my heart.

I felt that from God. He's gotta do it. I said, God, if he looks and turns to me, I'm gonna just hold up my hand and say, no, I'm not coming.

Sing, I Gotta Get to Jesus. He had the microphone. He turned to me.

I began to put up my hand to tell him what I felt in my heart. This is a little thing, but to me, it's a big thing. He started to say, you know, Pastor Semble, I think you need to, no, we're gonna sing, I Gotta Get to Jesus.

That's what we have to do right now. And they did it. Can we just give God a clap offering of praise? Here's the verse I wanna give everybody.

Jesus is teaching in Luke, and here's what he says. Very short. When they bring you to be tried in the synagogues or before governors or rulers, do not be worried about how you will defend yourself or what you will say.

He's talking to the disciples about this. For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say. Now listen again.

When they bring you to be tried in the synagogues or before governors or rulers, do not be worried. Don't be afraid. Don't be anxious about how you will defend yourself or what you will say.

You don't have to worry about preparation or notes or anything, because the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say. You'll be inspired right at that moment. Does it mean equal inspiration with the Scripture? Well, of course not.

The Scripture is closed. We have 66 books. That's the rule of doctrine and faith for all of us.

This is not new doctrine, new revelation. This is to know how to defend yourself and share Christ. You don't have to worry about anything.

At the moment, you just open your mouth, and the Holy Spirit will start to speak to you. Let's just think about that. So what's that say in general principle, not in specifics? What God is saying through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is this.

The day's gonna come after I die for your sins, and they're washed away because you put your trust in me, and I ascend to the Father. Then I will send the Holy Spirit, and then and only then will God's final plan be able to be realized, which is not just your sins washed away, but now you will be filled with, controlled by, helped by, inspired by the very Spirit of God. You will not have to go to a priest or a church or talk to a pastor.

God himself will help you. Now, notice, where will they get the words to say? The Holy Spirit will give it to them, not your words. Don't worry.

When that moment comes, you'll receive words. Words will be given you. This is the thing that God had planned ever since the fall of man, that his creation would come back into fellowship and come back to the original order of things that has been spoiled and ruined by sin, and even those of us who are Christians have very little confidence or experience in what God's intention has always been.

He gives, we receive. When? Always. How often? All the time.

He doesn't say, I'm working with you now. I'm gonna teach you some principles. Remember them.

I want to ingrain them in you. When you get arrested or you have to get up to speak, just remember what I told you, and then you'll be fine, because I'm gonna train you. He didn't train them that way.

That's mental, soulish, human training that you get in a college or a school. What he said was, no, no, no. I've been with you, and I've taught you things, but none of them have become very real to you, because when he was arrested, they all fled, because they were concepts in their mind.

They weren't realities in their soul. They could never become realities as long as Jesus was on the earth, because all he could do was teach his voice, their ears, their mind, but he said, the day is coming when the Holy Spirit will be given. In fact, he looked forward to that day and said, it's good for you that I'm leaving you, because unless I leave, I can't send the Holy Spirit, and when I send the Holy Spirit, God's original intention will finally be fulfilled, which is man doing nothing but receiving from God continually.

You need love? God will give you the love. No, but whatever he gives you now, you need more love tomorrow? He'll give you more tomorrow. You need wisdom? You need direction? The Holy Spirit continually giving inspiration, not once in a while.

The name of this little exhortation is occasional God, and that's what a lot of us have, is an occasional God, because we have an occasional need of the Holy Spirit, but Jesus had laid down in John when he said, without me, you can do what? And then Paul later picks up on that, where he says, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, and he also says, the life that I now live, I live through Christ, depending on Christ, through the Holy Spirit, to produce every single thing that God requires. Here's the point. God requires nothing that he first doesn't give.

God requires nothing of us, except that he will give it first so that we can do what he asks us to do. He must be the source of everything. So when you get arrested and you stand up against the wall and you don't know what to say, don't you be anxious, because the day has come, the gospel era is now completed.

Not just sins forgiven, and now try hard to do the best you can, no. Yes, study, seek God, and all that, but just remember, in a pinch, the Holy Spirit will be your boldness. The Holy Spirit will give you words.

In other words, God's original intention with his creation has always been, you own nothing. You receive everything from me, keep what you need, and let the overflow go to other people. And when you run out, you go right back to me, whether it's five minutes later or five days later, but you have nothing in yourselves.

You can possess nothing. You only are a receiving vessel. You receive from me, then you're dissatisfied, whatever you need, fulfillment, and now the overflow goes to other people.

So let's go back in time. God created the angels. When the angels came into existence, what were they? What did they have? What was their life like? Well, there was a moment when they were not, because only God is eternal, and then there was a moment where they were.

They were created. What did they have? Whatever God gave them. What did they do? Whatever God told them.

Whatever did they enjoy? Whatever God gave them. They had nothing. They could do nothing.

They had no will of their own. They had no existence of their own. They were totally dependent on the one who had created them.

What should we do today? Tell us, Lord. Show us. That's our fulfillment, is to receive instruction, receive angelic life.

However they live, everything came from God, because how could you have something on your own when someone created you? If someone created you and sustained you, how could you have something? You can have nothing except what the creator gave you, and your ongoing existence would be nothing but continual receiving from God instructions, joy, peace, whatever. That was their life. But one of them, in a mystery that we don't understand, said, no, I'm gonna have something of my own, and it's gonna lift me up with pride.

I'm just not a receiver. I have something. I am somebody.

That's the cry of humanity. I am somebody. And that Lucifer, lifted up with pride, said, no, I'm not gonna depend on God for everything.

I'm not gonna claim that everything I have comes from him. I have meaning, I have something. But no angel had ever thought that before, because they knew.

We're only here because he created us. In some mysterious way, the mystery of evil, original evil, Lucifer rebelled against God, fought against the order that God had put in that angelic universe, and then persuaded other angelic beings to go with him and rebel against heaven. That's how we get the devil, Satan, Satan or the devil, and that's how we get his legion of fallen angels.

So then God created, at the right time, Adam and Eve. When they came into existence, when he breathed into Adam the breath of life, when Eve first took her first breath, what did they have? Where'd they live? Where'd God put them? How'd they live every day? Whatever God gave them. How'd they find their joy? From God, who had created them and who had fellowship with them.

Every breath they took, it came from God. Not just the first breath, every breath comes from God. How many acknowledge that every breath you took today comes from God? Not the first breath, not the first breath, every breath.

Everything came from God. They had nothing of themselves, they had nothing. They looked inside, there was nothing.

Just receive, receive, receive, pour it out to others eventually when mankind began to become more numerous. So everything in life was just receive and pour out and what joy there was. In just finding their everything in God, possessing nothing.

How could you possess something if you got it from somebody else? If a man is a beggar in the street and someone gives him \$100, is he gonna get up and strut around and say, I got \$100. What do you mean, you have nothing? Somebody gave you that \$100. All they had was what God gave them.

I wish somebody would have taught me about Christianity like this when I was a teenager. I saved myself a lot of heartache, a lot of trying, a lot of making promises. When you fail, try even harder.

With what? The Bible says only God is good. So if anyone has any goodness, where must they get it from? There can't be two good people, God and you. If anyone does anything good, it has to come from God because the Bible says only God is good.

When the Bible says be holy, the Bible teaches that God is the trice holy one, holy, holy, holy, that God alone is holy. Is that not what the Bible teaches? So if God tells us to be holy, where are you gonna get

that from except from God? You can't have any holiness of your own because in us dwells no good thing. Sin has just, as they say in Trinidad, just mustered the whole thing up, right? And it's a mess.

And now through Jesus Christ, God is saying, I wanna bring my children back to the original plan. They have nothing. No, they have everything.

When you have nothing and look to him, you have everything you need. When you think you have something, then you miss out on what he has. Didn't Jesus teach this? Without me, you can do nothing.

Abide in me and I will abide in you. This is a rose bush, make believe. And here's the rose.

And you see it bud and now it blossoms. And you go, what a beautiful rose. Is this not beautiful? Isn't that rose beautiful? So I'm gonna take some scissors and cut it because I wanna show it to some.

The minute you cut it, it's not a rose anymore. It's dead. Why? The only reason it's a beautiful rose is the spirit of the rose is flowing through the vine and producing that red rose.

The minute you separate it from its source, it has nothing, can do nothing. It's only a recipient. This branch can only receive, if it was real, what's in the plant.

An apple comes out because it's an apple tree. The minute you pick it, it's gonna die. Just leave it on a shelf.

I bought some apples the other day. I forgot where I hid them in the refrigerator. I was so hungry for an apple, I took it out.

Is there nothing worse than a soft, squishy apple? I went to cut it because I wanted to eat it and it just made me sick as I cut it because it had spoiled. Why? No, on the tree, it's an apple. But once you cut it off, when it comes to fruit, you gotta eat it quick because it's dying.

And that's the way we are. So the Holy Spirit was sent so that we can have not what we need when we're defending the gospel only in Luke 12. Notice, this is true for everything in life.

You wanna develop Christian character? The Bible says, but the fruit of the spirit is what? Love, joy, peace, meekness. The fruit of whom? I have no fruit. It's the fruit of the spirit working through me.

You can't worship without God helping you to worship. Am I correct? You can't understand the Bible. Only God can open your eyes to even understand his word.

You can do nothing. You can do nothing. Brothers and sisters, when you pick up your Bible tomorrow, just say a short prayer, God, open my eyes that I might see and understand this word.

Only you can teach me. Only you can produce patience. Only you can make me kind to those who are unkind.

It's all of God through the Holy Spirit. And that's why Jesus said, after he rose from the dead, I've been with you 40 days. I'm going back to heaven.

Here's what I want you to do. Start going door to door and handing out literature. Rent the Jerusalem Coliseum and have a mass rally.

He said, no, you have the right message, but unless the spirit is breathing out the love, the words, the wisdom, the guidance, you'll just be stiffly, mechanically religious. What was it that made religious people the people who killed God? The scribes and the Pharisees, they were the religious people. They knew the most about the Bible, and yet they killed Jesus because they were separated from life.

They didn't have that spirit of God working in them, or else their eyes would have been open and they would have seen it's Jesus. It's Jesus. But without the spirit of God, you can be religious and fight and get mean because there's no life.

There's no spirit of God producing what only God can produce. And that's why we need to pray for our own lives and for our church. We have certain needs and things, we prayed about at the noon service, and the pastors prayed about, Pastor Park led us.

But we gotta pray that we have more and more of the Holy Spirit operating in our lives. I don't want an occasional God. How many want a Holy Spirit 24-7 working? Listen, working in us, whispering like he did on Sunday afternoon, guiding, leading, showing, giving us a quickening.

If I could say this for the glory of God, I just got the most beautiful card. I'm saying this for God's glory. Forgive the personal reference.

Forgive me for doing it. I felt prompted two Sundays ago to call people who were just afraid, afraid, afraid, in one of the services. I was praying for them.

Oh, the choir was singing, and there was one beautiful black lady right here, but she was crying so deeply. She was crying so deeply. I didn't know what was going on with her, and she was pregnant.

She looked to me like seven, eight months maybe. She was more than that, but I didn't know. And I felt the Lord direct me to go over to her and just pray for her, but she was sobbing, brothers and sisters.

Listen, always obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit, okay? So as I was praying for her, I felt the Lord prompt me. The Holy Spirit say to me, give her \$200. So we got through praying.

Everybody was there. I whispered to her, at the end of the meeting, I wanna see you. Come over there.

So I went back. I spoke to my secretary, and I said, the church is gonna bless this lady. Go get \$200.

So at the end of the service, I announced on the microphone, that lady I prayed for who's pregnant, please don't forget me. So she walks over, had an envelope. I said, this is a little blessing from the church.

Oh, thank you. She took off. So she writes me a letter.

She said, thank you so much for your kindness, but I know that was God. I'm paraphrasing. Because my baby was so overdue that it was frightening me to death.

And you prayed for me, and I gave birth next day. I had the baby the next day. Listen.

And I had all these bills, and the money you gave me helped me with some of the bills. Now who can glory in that? Me? I wouldn't know who to pray for. I wouldn't know who to give money to.

I wouldn't know how to do anything. But God knows everything. How many believe that he still wants us to live in that supernatural realm of, come on, wave your hand at me, so that I know.

God, wave it again. God, look at our hands. We're believing in this Lord.

Signs and wonders. God is moving by his spirit. So this is for the whole church.

They're going to Rwanda. Now how in the world could they minister to the people in Rwanda without the power of the Holy Spirit? There's all kinds of demonic powers anywhere you go in the world. You wouldn't know what to do, who to talk to, what promptings.

Listen, all of you that were up here, God's gonna lead you and direct you. But you gotta be receivers. You gotta keep your antenna up all day long.

Listen to me. Keep that antenna up and be ready to receive prayers, worship. Haven't you felt the Holy Spirit prompt you to praise God? Come on, how many have ever felt that? That's not coming from you, the world, the flesh, the devil.

No, that's the Holy Spirit prompting us to worship God. Everything comes from him. This truth is so wonderful because it makes us relax and give up.

Oh, I don't have to do anything. I just have to receive from God. I received his forgiveness.

Now I'm gonna receive his power. I received pardon at Calvary. Now through the Spirit, I'm gonna receive wisdom and understanding and direction and love.

Oh, I can't forgive that person. They were so mean. It's not in Jim Cimbala.

He's too ornery. But God, give me your mercy. Give me your forgiveness.

You can't do anything without the Holy Spirit. If you're hungry for him, just lift up your hands and begin to praise God out loud now, right now. Open your mouth and praise him out loud.

Come on, everyone. No one's too high and mighty not to do that. Gracias, Señor.

We praise you. We praise you. We glorify Jesus.

Holy Spirit, look, we're glorifying Jesus. You prompted us to praise him. You came to glorify him.

We give Jesus all the glory and all the praise and all the honor. We praise you. We're thirsty for you.

We're thirsty for you. We're hungry for you. Jehovah Jireh, our provider in everything, in every way.

We need you, Lord. We praise you, Lord. We praise you, Lord.

Looking back over all the years, it's always been you, Lord. It's always been you. Any good thing we've ever said or done, it comes from you, God.

Comes from you, God. We bless your name. We praise your name, Lord.

We praise your name. We want more of you, Lord. We have nothing, Lord.

We are nothing. But through you, we have everything, Lord. We can do all things, Lord.

Whatever you need, just reach out now and praise the Lord and receive it. Whatever you need. Whatever it is that you need.

Come on, you know the battles you're fighting? We receive your boldness. We receive faith from you. We receive every good and perfect gift from you, Lord.

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