

Scriptures from Prayer Meeting May 4: The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Agent of prayer:

Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The Holy Spirit was given to us after Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension:

Acts 2:32-33 God raised Jesus up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having *received* from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.

John 7:37-39 On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to *receive*; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The Holy Spirit could be given us to only because Jesus took away our sins by his death:

John 20:19-23 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "*Receive* the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Galatians 3:1-2 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you *receive* the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard?

Galatians 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"-- in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might *receive* the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The Holy Spirit is given to us in answer to prayer. Those who do not pray do not receive:

Acts 8:14-17 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and *prayed for them* that they might *receive* the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they *received* the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11:13 If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the holy Spirit to those *who ask him?*"

John 14:15-17 If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And *I will ask the Father*, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot *receive*, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

1 Cor 2:14 The unspiritual do not *receive* the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

If we do pray and have faith that Jesus has taken away our sins, then we can receive the Spirit:

Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let everyone who hears say, "Come." And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

The indwelling Holy Spirit works in us to root out sin, and prepares us for our final resurrection. The Spirit also makes us children of God:

Romans 8:11-17 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you. So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have *received* a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ-- if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

The Holy Spirit leads us to proclaim that Jesus is Lord:

1 Corinthians 12:3 No one can say "*Jesus is Lord*" except by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 10:9 If you confess with your lips that *Jesus is Lord* and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

2 Corinthians 4:5 We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim *Jesus Christ as Lord* and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

Phil 2:10-11 At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father.

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is always active, never stationary, like a flowing river, not a stagnant pond:

Revelation 22:1 The angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Because the Holy Spirit is always in motion, in order to cooperate with the Holy Spirit we too need to be in motion. We received the Spirit at baptism, at confirmation, at confession, but we need to respond to the new actions of the Holy Spirit regularly. The activity of the Spirit may have become like dying embers in our hearts, but we can always fan them into flame with God's grace. This fanning into a flame involves testimony to Jesus (our Lord) in the face of persecution.

2 Timothy 1:5-8 I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and that I am confident lives also in you. For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.

Concluding Reflections:

The Holy Spirit leads us to cry out to God, Abba! Father!

The Holy Spirit leads us to proclaim, Jesus is Lord!

But the Holy Spirit does not seek verbal glorification. The verb associated with the Holy Spirit is RECEIVE. The Holy Spirit is glorified when we RECEIVE the Holy Spirit. So, to have a devotion to the Holy Spirit does not mean to say any prayers to the Holy Spirit. In order to adore and glorify the Spirit we need to constantly receive the Holy Spirit, who flows like a river. The Spirit constantly proceeds from the Father and the Son. There is no beginning, and no end, to this eternal procession. So, we must be constantly receiving the Spirit from the Father and the Son.

From the Nicene Creed

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

A Personal Declaration

I *trust* in God who is my Father,
I *proclaim* Jesus who is my Lord,
I *receive* the Spirit who gives me life.