

How To Receive The Greatest Gift

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"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." (Isaiah 64:4).

In the upper room, about 120 disciples waited for the gift of the Holy Spirit. They had an earnest appreciation of its importance. How do you think they felt as they thought of the past, remembered the ignominious crucifixion of their Lord, looked forward to the future, and contemplated the work to which He had called them?

And what had Jesus called them to do? They were not to go and set up an idol or a monument of Jesus Christ alongside other idols in the temples of the heathen gods. They were to go into the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had just been crucified between two thieves. They were to proclaim Jesus as the long-expected Messiah of the Jews. They were to begin setting up the Royal Spiritual Kingdom in contradiction to the temporal and earthly kingdom. Then, God commanded them to go out from Jerusalem and subjugate the world to His sway!

Poor Peter, Thomas, John, Mary and the rest of the women--how would they feel? They would feel, "We might as well stop and die here, as go out as we are, until we do get the equipment of power. We need something more than what we have got." So, they waited and prayed, "Lord, pour it out upon us; we are ready. We are helpless; we are powerless--we can do nothing. You know what you have called us to do, and you have promised us power to perform it. Now, here we are. It is useless for us to begin until we get power." They appreciated its importance.

God never gives the gift of His Spirit to any human being who has not come to the point that he would sell all he had to get it. The Holy Spirit is the most precious gift that God has to give in earth or in heaven. Think of the Holy Spirit filling you, filling you with himself, God taking possession of you. Think of being moved, inspired, energized, empowered by God, by the great indwelling Spirit moving through all your faculties and energizing your whole being for God. That is the greatest and most glorious gift He has to give today.

The Father is not likely to give the Holy Spirit to people who do not highly appreciate Him. You must appreciate Him so highly that you will forego all other gifts for Him--everything else, creature love, creature comfort, ease, enjoyment, and aggrandizement for this one thing. Have you come to this? Are you telling this to the Lord Jesus? Are you seeking the filling of the Holy Spirit?

I have often thought of the Savior, when so many who had been hearing Him forsook Him and fled. He had been trying to lead them higher, even to real spiritual union with himself. They were not willing to go all the way--to pay the price--to suffer the consequences. So, if you want this blessing, I know of no other way than I have just described.

I had to come to this before I received the filling of the Holy Spirit. The last idol of my soul had to be renounced, and it was hard work, as it always is because we love idols. Idols would not be idols if they were not loved. We have to lay our real Isaac, our beloved and only Isaac, upon the altar. It is hard work, but it has to be done because He is a jealous God and will have no rivals.

Do you so appreciate this blessing that you are willing to give up your Isaac? If so, you may have the filling of the Holy Spirit today. God will fill you with His Spirit.

The disciples of Jesus Christ waited in obedient faith for Him to fulfill His promise. They did as He asked them. Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem, and they did not go off fishing or to the beach. Peter didn't say, "I can wait as well on the beach as in Jerusalem. I wonder why the Lord told me to go to Jerusalem? I think it was unreasonable. I think I will go back to my fishing nets." No. Jesus had cured the disciples of their unbelief by the last few days' experiences. They had learned better than to dictate to their Master, and they knew He had a good purpose in sending them to Jerusalem. So, they went there and did as He told them. Back to the upper room they went.

They had learned better than to reason, "I have been running about ministering to the Savior a long time. I'm afraid my friends will think I am neglecting home duties and the claims of old friends. I really must go home and see to matters there for a while. I may as well wait there for the Holy Spirit as at Jerusalem." Mary had learned better than that. She went back to Jerusalem. We have their names. They entered the upper room, shut the door, and waited--obedient faith! One of the poets said:

"Obedient faith that waits on Thee, Thou never will reprove."

God sends the disobedient faith away empty. People are crying out about their faith, but it is a disobedient faith. If the Lord has told you to wait in any particular place, way, company, or time, and you disobey Him, He will not fill you with the Holy Spirit. At last, even if on your dying bed, you will have to come to these conditions.

Obedient faith! While there is one spark of insubordination, rebellion, or dictation, the Spirit will never fill you. Truly, only submissive and obedient people enter this kingdom. Anywhere He tells you to go, anything He tells you to sacrifice, or fly from, you will have to do. The Holy Spirit is one of His choice gifts that He has reserved for His choice servants, those who serve Him with all their hearts--obedient faith.

Dear Father, I confess that I have not fully appreciated the gift of the Holy Spirit as I ought. I have taken His indwelling for granted, and have not sought His filling as I should. Cleanse me, fill me, and empower me to serve you only for the sake of your kingdom. Amen.

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