

Luke 11:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Analysis

Jesus concludes teaching on prayer: 'how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' The phrase 'how much more' (Greek 'posō mallon,' πόσω μᾶλλον) argues from lesser to greater—if sinful human fathers give good gifts, infinitely more will the perfect heavenly Father give. The greatest gift is 'the Holy Spirit'—not material blessings but God Himself dwelling in us. The condition is simple: 'to them that ask'—prayer is the means. God gives His Spirit to those who ask, enabling relationship, transformation, and service. The Spirit is Christianity's defining gift.

Historical Context

This concludes Jesus' teaching on persistent prayer (vv. 5-13), using a parable about a friend's persistence and father-son relationship to illustrate God's responsiveness. Matthew's parallel says God gives 'good things' (Matthew 7:11); Luke specifies 'the Holy Spirit'—the ultimate good thing. Before Pentecost, the Spirit came on specific people for specific tasks. After Pentecost, the Spirit indwells all believers permanently (Acts 2). Jesus' promise anticipated this new covenant reality—the Spirit dwelling in believers (Joel 2:28-29, Ezekiel 36:26-27). Asking for the Spirit means desiring God's presence, power, and transformation, not material blessings.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Why is the Holy Spirit the greatest gift the Father can give, surpassing all material or circumstantial blessings?
2. What does 'to them that ask' teach about prayer as the means of receiving the Spirit's fullness and power?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	οὖν	ὕμεῖς	πονηροὶ	ὑπάρχοντες	οἴδατε	ἀγαθὰ	
If	then	ye	evil	being	know	good	
G1487	G3767	G5210	G4190	G5225	G1492	G18	
δόματα	δώσει	τοῖς	τέκνοις	ὑμῶν	πόσῳ	μᾶλλον	ὁ
gifts	give		children	unto your	how much	more	
G1390	G1325	G3588	G5043	G5216	G4214	G3123	G3588
πατήρ	ὁ	ἐξ	οὐρανοῦ	δώσει	πνεῦμα	ἅγιον	τοῖς
Father			your heavenly	give	Spirit	the Holy	
G3962	G3588	G1537	G3772	G1325	G4151	G40	G3588
αἰτοῦσιν	αὐτόν						
to them that ask	him						
G154	G846						

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 7:11 (Evil): If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

John 4:10 (Parallel theme): Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Romans 8:32 (Parallel theme): He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Proverbs 1:23 (Spirit): Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

Acts 2:38 (Holy): Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Joel 2:28 (Spirit): And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

Ezekiel 36:27 (Spirit): And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Isaiah 49:15 (Parallel theme): Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

Matthew 6:14 (Parallel theme): For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

Matthew 6:30 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?