

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,' πόσῳ 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 ὑμεῖς 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 G3588 children unto your how much more G3588
G1390 G1325 G5043 G5216 G4214 G3123

πατὴρ ὁ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ δώσει πνεῦμα ἄγιον τοῖς
Father G3588 G1537 your heavenly give Spirit the Holy G3588
G3962 G3772 G1325 G4151 G40

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 knewst 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?