

The Book of Luke

Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and Prayer

Lesson #7 for May 16, 2015

Scriptures: Luke 2:25-32; 11:1-4,9-13; 23:46; John 16:5-7; Mark 7:21-23.

1. This lesson focuses on the relationship of Jesus in His humanity with His Father and the Holy Spirit through prayer. In his attempt to carefully represent the details of Jesus's life on this earth, Luke referred to the Holy Spirit 17 times in his Gospel and 57 times in the book of Acts. In contrast, Matthew only referred to the Holy Spirit 12 times and Mark 6 times.
2. From before Jesus's birth, the Holy Spirit was involved in the mission of Jesus. The Holy Spirit came upon Mary, and thus, her Son was truly the Son of God. (Luke 1:35) More than that, this divine Baby was already affecting others in His environment. When visited by Mary, the elderly Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:42) Even before He was born, she called Him "Lord." How did she know that? What did Mary tell her? Did she really believe that God was in her belly?
3. Read Luke 24:44-49 and Acts 1:7-9. At every step in His life, Jesus felt the need of planning the day-by-day details of His life in cooperation with the Father and the Holy Spirit. On numerous occasions, Jesus prayed all night consulting with the Father and the Spirit about Their plans for the coming day. (Luke 6:12) If Jesus as the divine-human Son of God felt such a need for prayer, how much more do we need it?

Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation.—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 95.0.

4. As a Greek physician and the only non-Jewish writer in the entire Bible, Luke viewed the life and mission of Jesus as a miraculous, continual cooperation between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Shortly after the birth of Jesus when He was presented at the temple in Jerusalem, Simeon appeared and took the baby in his arms. The Holy Spirit was with him and had assured him that he would not die until he saw God's salvation with his own eyes. Simeon recognized that This Baby would bring salvation not only to Israel but also to the Gentiles. (Luke 2:25-32) Did he realize the implications of what he was saying?
5. When Jesus was about to begin His ministry, He went to John the Baptist to be baptized. As He came up out of the water, He prayed. Heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit came down upon Him like a Dove, and His Father's voice was heard from heaven saying: "You are my own dear Son. I am pleased with you." (Luke 3:22, *GNB*) The Holy Spirit had revealed to John that Jesus would be coming to him to be baptized, and John announced that to the people.

So John said to all of them, "I baptize you with water, but someone is coming who is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to untie his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:16, *GNB*)

6. Read Luke 4:1; Matthew 4:1-2; and Mark 1:12-13. What was the purpose of Jesus going into the wilderness after His baptism? Was He led into the wilderness so He could be tempted? Not at all! Jesus spent those 40 days without physical food but in close communication with the Holy Spirit and the Father. It was only at the end of those 40 days when He was extremely hungry that the Devil approached Him, hoping for an opportunity to overcome Him. From that time on, the Holy Spirit was intimately connected with the ministry of Jesus. (See Luke 4:1; contrast Matthew 4:1.) It was especially at the end of the 40 days that Satan

showed up.

7. The Devil and his horde of evil angels were determined to: 1) Get Jesus to sin; or 2) Get Jesus to give up and go back to heaven; or 3) Destroy Him, if that was possible, (Matthew 2:13-18) such as with the storm on the lake (Luke 8:22-25; Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41) or keep Him in the grave. The Devil was working so hard at that task that God decided it was necessary to give Jesus two guardian angels under the control of the Holy Spirit to prevent Satan from taking unfair advantage of Jesus or even killing Him or trying to force Him to do something wrong and prevent Him from carrying out His ministry. (*The Desire of Ages* 831.1-832.1) These two angels (one of them was Gabriel) were the most exalted of the angels; one of them was probably the one who took Lucifer's place in heaven.
8. The opening words of His sermon at Nazareth were an application of Isaiah's Messianic prophecy to Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." (Luke 4:18, *GNB*) The Spirit was His constant Companion, His affirming strength, and His abiding presence among His followers when Jesus would no longer be in their midst. (John 16:5-7) He told His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go away so that after His departure, they could receive the Holy Spirit. Earlier, He had promised—as recorded in Luke 11:13—that He would give the Holy Spirit to all who in sincerity asked for It. When the Spirit comes, Satan runs.
9. So, what is the role of the Holy Spirit in our salvation? How are we to relate to Him? The most important thing that the Holy Spirit has done and is doing for us was and is His role as the Inspirer of the Bible writers. Working through the angels, He impresses on our minds and hearts the truths of Scripture.
10. Read Luke 12:10. Why is it so serious if we speak against the Holy Spirit? Because of the work of the Holy Spirit and the angels, we can be forgiven and transformed into the likeness of Jesus. That is God's plan for each one of us. If we reject God's plan for our salvation, what other hope could there possibly be?
11. The Holy Spirit works for us in four ways:
 - 1) He keeps us alive physically. (Acts 17:25,28)
 - 2) In association with His angel assistants, He is constantly seeking to woo us into an ever closer relationship with God.
 - 3) For those who respond to His wooing, He convicts, converts, and leads them to baptism.
 - 4) To those who have become true Christians, He gives the gifts of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Ephesians 4:11-16)
12. What can we learn from the prayer life of Jesus? Jesus felt such an urgent need for the guidance and moment-by-moment direction of His Heavenly Partners, the Father and the Holy Spirit, that He was almost constantly in prayer. Note these important occasions in His ministry when Jesus felt a need to pray.
 1. As we noted in Luke 3:21, He prayed at His baptism. The Father and the Holy Spirit joined Him. "A new and important era was opening before Him. He was now, upon a wider stage, entering on the conflict of His life."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 111.3.
 2. Jesus prayed all night in consultation with His Father and the Holy Spirit before choosing His 12 disciples. (Luke 6:12-13) Don't you think They considered each name carefully? Jesus was not only selecting followers but also choosing those who would understand and identify completely with His Person and His mission. Although not convinced of His Godhood and not truly committed to the work they were to do until even after His resurrection, most of them would end up being martyrs! "Their office was the most important to which human beings had ever been called, and was second only to that of Christ Himself."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 291.3.

3. In Caesarea Philippi, in preparation for what He knew was coming, Jesus prayed for His disciples and then asked that crucial question, "Who do you say that I am?" (Luke 9:20)
4. Read Luke 9:28-36. Before His transfiguration, Jesus took three of His closest disciples with Him up the hill where He asked them to pray with Him. After they had fallen asleep, Jesus was transfigured, awakening them. They heard the voice of God calling Jesus His beloved Son. Peter, speaking about that occasion, later wrote, "With our own eyes we saw his greatness." (2 Peter 1:16, *GNB*) Jesus told them not to tell until later. (Mark 9:9)
5. Read Luke 22:39-46. Jesus took those same three disciples with Him into the Garden of Gethsemane. While they slept, He prayed fervently to His Father in what is probably the most important prayer in the history of salvation. The entire universe watched the battle between Jesus [God] and Satan in that garden. Jesus was so stressed as He felt His relationship with the Father being broken up that drops of blood came out like sweat, and He finally fell dying to the ground. (*DA* 693.1) He died of sin. It was necessary for an angel from heaven to come and revive Him, or He would have died right there. (Luke 22:43) In that prayer we learn three important things: 1) God's will should be our number one priority at all times. 2) Like Jesus, we should be committed to doing God's will even at the risk of death. 3) God will provide strength to overcome every temptation that the Devil can bring against us. (1 Corinthians 10:13) Then, Jesus had to go through that awful period of arrest, trials, torture, and crucifixion. Once again, He felt His relationship with the Father breaking up, leading Him to cry: "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?" (Matthew 27:46, *GNB*)
6. But Jesus, exercising His faith, relied upon the evidence which had heretofore been given Him; (*DA* 756.3) and even though He could not see through the portals of the tomb, (*DA* 753.1-2) "Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Father! In your hands I place my spirit!' He said this and died." (Luke 23:46, *GNB*)
13. On two different occasions, Jesus gave us a model prayer to use as an example of how we should pray. Read Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4. It is interesting to note that in the earliest manuscripts, these two versions of the Lord's prayer were different. In the oldest manuscripts, neither of these prayers closed with the doxology that we usually add. More than that, Luke's Gospel omits the "Our" and the "in heaven" at the beginning of the prayer. Luke also left out the phrase "may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Do these differences worry you? The two prayers were given at different times in Jesus's ministry. And those prayers were not intended to be just memorized and repeated verbatim; they were intended to be a model of the things for which we need to pray. Jesus wanted us to remember the closeness that we can experience to the Father. We must, however, recognize that His name is blessed. We may claim to be His followers, even doing miracles in His name; but, if we do not do His will, it is a sin that will not be forgiven. (Matthew 7:21-23)
14. We should pray for God's kingdom to come quickly. (Luke 11:2) There are more than 100 references to God's kingdom in the Gospels. They refer not only to this kingdom of grace in which we live now but also the coming kingdom of glory.
15. We should also pray, as suggested in Matthew 6:10, that God's will be done here on earth just as it is in heaven.
16. Read Luke 11:3. God has promised to provide our physical necessities. But, we need to pray for them, recognizing His gifts.
17. Read Luke 11:9-13. Jesus went on to promise that if we ask, we will receive; if we truly seek, we will find; if we knock, the door will be opened. And just as parents and grandparents here on this earth love to give good gifts to their children, God will give even better gifts to those who ask Him to give them the Holy Spirit.

18. Read Luke 11:1-4. Do we use the Lord's prayer as a pattern on which to base our daily prayers? How many separate issues are dealt with in the Lord's prayer?
19. Read Luke 11:5-13. What was Jesus trying to say to us in these verses? God is certainly a very free Giver. So, why was He compared, apparently, in this parable to a man who was very reluctant to give? What are the reasons for being persistent in prayer? Does persistent prayer change God? Or, does it change us? Verses 9-13 seem to make it very clear that God is more than willing to be generous.
20. Read Luke 18:9-14. In this parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector, Jesus was picking out the extremes in Jewish society! The Pharisee who faithfully did all the things he thought he was supposed to do was actually certain that He had earned his way to heaven. Furthermore, he was a son of Abraham! He was so proud that he was not like the tax collector.
21. By contrast, the tax collector was bowing humbly and speaking reverently to God without any thought of how it might impact the people around him. Why do you think Jesus said the tax collector went home in a right relationship with God while the Pharisee did not? Why is humility such an essential part of the Christian experience?

Meekness and lowliness are the conditions of success and victory. A crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 590.2.

22. Have you ever been tempted to look around the church and compare yourself with others? Does God grade "on the curve"? Or, does it even matter how many other people may truly be worse off spiritually than you are?

The soul that turns to God for its help, its support, its power, by daily, earnest prayer, will have noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth and duty, lofty purposes of action, and a continual hungering and thirsting after righteousness. By maintaining a connection with God, we shall be enabled to diffuse to others, through our association with them, the light, the peace, the serenity, that rule in our hearts. The strength acquired in prayer to God, united with persevering effort in training the mind in thoughtfulness and care-taking, prepares one for daily duties and keeps the spirit in peace under all circumstances.—Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings* 85.2.

In calling God our Father, we recognize all His children as our brethren. We are all a part of the great web of humanity, all members of one family. In our petitions we are to include our neighbors as well as ourselves. No one prays aright who seeks a blessing for himself alone.—Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 105.1.

23. In this lesson we have seen that Luke went out of his way to make it clear that the Holy Spirit was intimately involved with the lives of Jesus and His apostles. The end of the book of Luke (Luke 24:49) talks about power coming from heaven while in Acts 1:7-8 and Acts 2, the second book in Luke's series, he continued to tell about the Holy Spirit.
24. Do we spend enough time in prayer? Does our prayer experience bring us closer to God? Do our prayers sound more like the Pharisee? Or, more like the tax collector?

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