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Sermon preached by Mr R Kinderman  
at Rehoboth Chapel, Swindon  
on Monday evening 12 March 1956

Luke 11 v 13

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

What encouragement, what tenderness, there is in the gospel. When Jesus was here on earth we read that He was despised and rejected of men, that His claims were set at nought, but the Lord Jesus on one occasion said this, wonderful truth, "Wisdom is justified of her children". That my friends is proved continually for there is a people that the Spirit of God makes manifest with divine power, with gracious authority, by the working of His own truth, and although feelingly unfit, and like one who had to say "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof", yet by the sweet drawing and working of divine grace in the soul, the Lord Jesus and His truth are made precious. I felt, in this, that this particular portion was spoken to the disciples of Christ, and in the text the Lord Himself speaks of "your heavenly Father". It may at times seem to discourage, by this, that with the poet we may often rightly feel that we would not presume, (Hymn 1083) but there are those evidences, there are those truths made manifest, which prove the relationship. It is a great mercy if the Spirit of God manifest those truths by which there is a relationship to the Lord, and by which we may prove His mercy and His power. The Lord Jesus sometimes drew His disciples aside. It is a mercy to be drawn aside. It is a privilege of God's children to be drawn aside. It is a mark of true discipleship. I have often thought, breaking in, that even in that there is a need for exercise of mind. Judas was one of the twelve, and although he too heard many of the declarations of Christ to His immediate disciples, there is one solemn mark lacking, and what a mercy if it may never prove to be lacking in you and me, and that is love to Christ. Although Judas was among the twelve, although he went about with them, and although he preached, Judas had no love to Christ. That is a solemn matter. I had not really thought to mention it, only it seemed just to come to mind

in respect of the disciples. My friends, it will be a mercy, and it is a mercy, however fearful some of you may feel to be, and however at times you may wonder if you have got a real hope, there is one truth the Spirit of God works with divine power in the soul in a sinner loved eternally, and that is this, there is a love to Christ. That my friends is something that only the Lord can make known personally; although we unite together, and there is a unity of Spirit in the church, for there is no schism in the body of Christ, there are many difficulties in the flesh. The apostle speaks of wars that come amongst us through the flesh, but there is no schism in the body of Christ. But my friends there is this, that wherever the Lord works by divine power He gives a love to the Lord Jesus. What a mercy to have it. That comes through what you have sung, through that gracious dealing of the Spirit in real poverty. I mention that because this was a very sacred time. There are times, there are special times of God's teaching to His children. Some of you know what it is to feel a special time of God's teaching, and that is in time of need, a place that the Spirit of God brings to. We may rightly say, God's divine appointments. I may open that up friends. It may be through some divine providence sanctified. The providences of God unsanctified are very solemn. They harden, work rebellion. Everything that is contrary to Christ will fail. However much trouble we may have in the flesh, if that is not sanctified to us it is to no profit. I was thinking only yesterday what the Lord speaks - "A sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed". When you consider what may go through a person's life in 100 years, unsanctified, it will only bring to hell. What a mercy my friends to have sanctified providences, sanctified blessings. You may ask how that can be proved. Well they lead to Christ. Everything that is of the Spirit, everything that is of God leads to Christ. Then we prove what one has said

Every grace and every favour  
Comes to us through Jesus blood

This was one of the special seasons of drawing and it had to do with asking, it had to do with coming before the Lord. The Lord speaks in this text, and He speaks of asking. That is a feature that is something to do with the Church of God. It is not just speaking, it is

not words, it is asking, and it is asking for the Holy Spirit, a very important part of God's teaching to His children. You remember the Lord solemnly spoke that the world could not receive nor know the Holy Spirit, a very solemn mark. The Lord also speaks of the time when it shall be made manifest that there is a sin against the Holy Ghost. If ever there was a day my friends when that truth was made manifest, it is today, the sin against the Holy Ghost. May the Lord preserve us from it. If we are God's disciples, chosen of God, following Christ in truth, we shall not be strangers to the Holy Spirit and we shall be brought more and more to this, you have sung it, (Hymn 674) that the Spirit of God, bringing experimentally into poverty, is, by the mercy of God, the channel by which there is a need of the Spirit. You can do nothing without the Holy Spirit and the Lord speaks of asking. What condescending mercy and what a gracious figure the Lord has given. I say what condescending mercy. You that are fathers, the Lord speaks, brings it into family relationship, brings in the children's asking. Then the Lord says "If ye being evil". Although we are sinners, prone to evil, hardness of heart, bitterness of spirit, if the Spirit of God is with us are there not times when we have to fall under the solemn truth of God and realise what we are, that we are evil? "Though," speaks the Lord in this, "it is your nature to be evil; breaking out in bitterness sometimes, and enmity, yet even in such a case the child's request for necessities will move the bowels of the father". If I may just in a homely manner use the illustration the Lord himself has given, if a child has proved to be hard, rebellious, and gone astray, "yet", the Lord says, "though the father is evil too, yet it is not according to nature to be so hard as to give a stone or a serpent to a child asking for bread or a fish" The Lord has given us a figure, I use it just in this illustration, the deep truth in it, the truth of the gospel - the liberty of God's children to and in their worst state. That sinner that asked his father to give him his portion and went into a far country and spent it in riotous living, when he came back the bowels of the father were moved. He did not say I shall not give you anything. I would not give you a fish, I would not give you an egg. My friends is it not true? And the Lord speaks, makes manifest a gracious, tremendous distinction, the love of God, the love of Christ to His church, to poor sinners, ruined sinners, backsliding sinners, unworthy sinners. "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts

unto your children". Although we are prone to all that is contrary to God, yet we know how to give good gifts unto our children. Isn't it true? And what an encouragement if the Holy Spirit shine upon it. Sometimes have you seen in the simplicity of the gospel, the greatness of God's power? The Lord often works, if I may say this reverently, by very simple means, yet there is a deep truth. What an encouragement. Are we disciples? If we are, there is something we need to ask, that we are in need of. An enquiring mind, something that the Lord has put within. We need something that we have not got in possession. There is an asking for that which is felt to be needful. Do you feel to need the Holy Spirit? None but real disciples have ever asked for the Holy Spirit. One of our poets says very graciously

#### A sinner is a sacred thing

We do not need, do we, to go into what has been wrongfully interpreted by such an expression? That is not excusing sin, lightly looking at it, you cannot, you that know what sin is, you that feel it rising up in your heart. You cannot talk like this. A sinner being a sacred thing is this, they need a power, they need help, strength, mercy, as you have sung. They need everything that is good that they are not in possession of. And here my friends is an encouragement for real disciples, God's disciples, empty helpless sinners, who, by the mercy of God, are drawn to ask. What an encouragement. What an encouragement in the face of everything that is against you. One woman when she had been twelve years and all the money that she had had been spent in a false way, tried to get healing, and there came a time when she was made manifest. She did not feel it in her heart; I believe she could not have owned at that particular time that she was one of God's disciples, but the Spirit of God made her one. When she heard of Jesus she was drawn, drawn to ask. The poverty of her spirit, the reality of her case, brought her to be one that was made willing to ask. It is a great mercy to be made willing to ask. Some of you can look into that. When did you ask? When did you feel the need of the Holy Spirit? You may have been brought up in the house of God. Sometimes that may be a trial. You may not be able to point to any particular place or spot, some of you, but I will say this, a time came when there was a change, there was something wrought in your soul

that brought a distinction. There was something working in you that made you know what you never knew before and that was the reality of prayer. Prayer belongs to the disciples of Christ, friends. Words are of no value of themselves. Some of you know that. The Holy Spirit's work in the church is to make manifest the reality of prayer. What a tremendous mercy, what a truth it is to be made one that asks, asks of God, asks for something that, by the light of God's truth is made manifest in the soul, and that is the Holy Spirit. That is a good thing. "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children how much more" - "how much more shall your heavenly Father", who is good, gracious, merciful, longsuffering, "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him". O my friends, how true, praise goes forth from Zion, from poor sinners, to the acknowledgement of the mercy of a longsuffering God, kind and gracious in His gospel, in His gospel, to sinners. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him". The Lord has a peculiar way - some of you know this, I trust we may feel unity in it - the Lord has a peculiar way by His own divine means of bringing to a place of asking. "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you, for everyone that asketh receiveth" That my friends is true. There is no free will, there is no duty faith, there is no creature merit, because the asking of which the Lord speaks is under the special direct mercy of God in poor sinners.

This He gives you

'Tis the Spirit's rising beam

Do you ask for the Holy Spirit? Why my friends it is in this, that none but the Spirit of God can lead into the things of Christ. How mercifully the Lord opened that up to His disciples. I have often thought of it. We mentioned Judas, but if you read from the 13 chapter of John to the end of the 17 I have often felt that that is one of the sweetest portions; and Judas had gone out, it did not belong to him. He had no portion in the truth the Lord Jesus revealed. That my friends is not only to those immediate disciples, but to His church. "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter" which is the Holy Ghost "that He may abide with you for ever". Then again, the Lord Jesus spoke and said "When He the Spirit of Truth is come He will guide you into all truth for He shall not speak of

Himself but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak and He will show you things to come". When the Spirit opens such a truth, have you felt sometimes such a burning desire? Have you felt sometimes a longing, in your felt ignorance, nothingness, emptiness, and an asking that the Lord would grant the Holy Spirit to guide into the truth of Christ? From whence shall we know pardon, peace, the liberty of the gospel, the truths of salvation brought into the soul? There is no power but by the Holy Spirit. There is no revelation but by the Holy Spirit. I speak this evening, my friends, not as we understand judgmentally the truths of God. I believe we can all claim to know judgmentally the truths of God. Some of you have been brought to a place - might it be the will of God that each of us might be brought to such a place - where you have had to ask for the revelation of those truths, where you have had to ask for the application of those truths. And here, my friends, is a sweet promise, a gracious promise, though you may be tempted, in asking, and though sometimes you may have asked and perhaps have come often to this house of God, and to His Word, and to the throne of grace - even as you have been going about your daily work you have had to come before the Lord - and sometimes have been tempted to believe that the Lord would not answer your petition. But what an encouragement sinner! Do you ask for the Holy Spirit that, by that very means, you might be led into Christ, that you might have the sealing, the Holy Spirit that seals the truth, the Holy Spirit that witnesses that truth, the Holy Spirit that comes with gracious authority into the soul? It was by the Holy Spirit's teaching that Simeon came into the temple, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and in effect that was an asking. By the Spirit of God there was a continual asking. Asking is not always manifested just in words. May I say, it is not only in words, but in waiting and watching. Where this is so, by the mercy of God, all things concerning us are in keeping with it. It causes the feet to walk in the ways where Christ is revealed, causes the eye to go in the right direction, that is, into the Word of God. Is there not an asking in the Word of God? Do you know what it is sometimes to come to the Word of God and there is something within that is not satisfied with reading only? There is an inward exercise for the revelation of Christ by His Word, believing the truth of what the Lord Jesus said, to the Pharisees. They were content with the letter: "Search the Scriptures" He said to them "for in them ye think ye have eternal life" They did not need the Holy

Spirit, they did not feel their need. They were sufficient in themselves and they never asked, but the Lord says "For they are they which testify of Me". Have you asked for that sinner? Who, but disciples, really ask for the Holy Spirit in the revelation of the Word of God? Did you ever ask till the Lord drew you in love to the truth, that the Spirit of God would come into your very heart and open up the Word of God? And have we a witness in some humble measure?

"How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him". What a mercy! Are there never times, sinner, if I may come to this in honour to God, are there never times when the Lord fulfils this promise? What sweet mercy when the Holy Spirit comes! You may have read that portion many times. From your early childhood perhaps you have known that Scripture. The Word of God is a well-spring of living water. To disciples of Christ it becomes a living power. You do not read it and say, I have read it often; it is so intimate with me that I know it. And why? We know the truth of this, the Spirit of God has come, you have asked for a revelation, you have asked for an entering into Christ, you have asked that that might be sealed. Do you know what it is sometimes, maybe a sentence in the Word, just a sentence in a chapter - not laying that down as a line, but as a way the Lord works sometimes, and to open up this truth - and the Spirit of God has sealed that in your heart, the Holy Spirit has revealed Christ in that sentence in your soul. You have never felt it like that before, and you have felt a flowing of love and mercy. That, my friends, is one of the means at times by which the Lord reveals the truth of this, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

Is the Lord unfaithful to His promise? That is not the testimony of His church. The faithfulness of God, the goodness of God! You have to say sometimes, "I am unworthy Lord, I am unfit, and yet I need it". Do you ask in spite of your unworthiness, in spite of what you feel within, in spite of the powers that come against you? Friends, the disciples of Jesus - you may not feel always you can lay claim to that, but there is one truth that is manifested, the enemy will buffet, he will torment.

If unto Jesus thou art bound  
A crowd about Him will be found  
Attending day and night

You are not a stranger, because you are unworthy to ask, you are unfit to ask. Would not he keep you from prayer? Do you know what it is to feel sometimes something within that would keep you and say that you are unfit and unworthy to come before the Lord? Look at the sins of your profession! How unfit you are! You feel sometimes like the prodigal, and you say "I am not worthy to be called Thy son". But O, the mercy, O the mercy of God to poor sinners! In the very midst of that there is something that compels you to ask, there is something like it was with the prodigal - the Lord has brought you to want. I have often thought in his case, that that shows one of the greatest mercies of God, painful as it is to flesh, that the Lord brought him to want and did not leave him to fill up the measure of his iniquity. He was a child. Do you know what it is to feel such want that drives or draws you to the Lord in this gracious asking, and then for the Lord to hear and fulfil His promise?

"How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him" He will not withhold sinner. Some of you may feel, if the Lord is with us this evening and the Spirit of God is in your heart, you may even feel and say, in effect, "Well that does not apply to me; I feel so unfit", yet what an encouragement. "The Holy Spirit to them that ask". The Lord grant us grace to ask, humble our spirits. It is humbling to ask. The Lord waits to be gracious, oftentimes delays that there might be an asking. The Lord knows my friends. He knows all things concerning His church, and has all blessings to impart. But, He says, "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them". So the Lord waits to be gracious. Sometimes He withholds, withdraws, that there might be a further asking. Maybe, my friends, a lukewarm condition, apathy in the spirit. What a mercy to be awakened! What a mercy for the Lord to bring us to the place of one who said

Where is the blessedness I knew  
When first I saw the Lord?



That is an awakening, and what did it do under the mercy of God? - and it was His dealing. There was an asking, an asking for the Holy Spirit, for a reviving of truth, for a manifestation of the truth in the soul, for a closer walk with God, that by the Spirit there might be an entering into those things of Christ, to bring and manifest real communion and fellowship. What a mercy to be under that teaching! And the Lord is faithful to His promise. "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 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?" O, what an encouragement! backsliding sinner - not excusing. The Lord will deal, the Lord has brought to a place to feel it, brought you into want. Sometimes we may be, to all outward appearances, right in the eyes of others, coming to the house of God, reading the Word according to the daily ways and habits of our homes, and yet backsliders in heart, careless, indifferent. What a mercy when the Lord works, when He comes afresh, and graciously, and yet solemnly, deals by His chastening. What is the effect? An asking for the Holy Spirit.

Return, O holy Dove, return,  
Sweet messenger of rest

Have you asked? Will the Lord refuse you? The Lord says "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready" (John 7 v 6) But there is a time, there is a time to favour Zion. And then, to feel the mercy of this, to feel the blessing of it! It did seem to dovetail in a little with the life of Jacob in just one point, when he saw the wagons. There had been an asking, yet, my friends, it had been a long season before the Lord granted that desire of his heart. But God was faithful; that beautiful promise was to be fulfilled in all its fulness, and there was an asking, and in effect it was the blessing of the Holy Spirit. "When he saw the wagons ..... the spirit of Jacob ..... revived: And Israel said .....". That is God's grace in the soul; Israel always looks into the things of Christ; that is that new name, that is that mercy, that is the Holy Spirit's asking in truth, and the faithfulness of God to His promise. If I may

say, reverently, Jacob could then say, "I know that is true, God is faithful, He gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

If God bestow the Holy Spirit, my friends, we can say this, that heaven will be ours. There is no bestowing the Holy Spirit, only to those who are sealed eternally. Wonderful truth! The Trinity is in the grace of this. Those whom the Father loved, the Son shed His blood for them, and those are manifest and sealed by the Holy Spirit, and in this life they are made manifest as those that ask for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit of promise, the Holy Spirit of truth, witnessing, I say, the blessing of that grace in the soul.

"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". O that the Lord would make it a word of encouragement to you who are asking, sometimes discouraged by reason of the roughness of the way, and by reason of what appears to be the delaying of God's mercy. Something like it was at the tomb of Lazarus when Martha said "By this time he stinketh"; it seems impossible. But was it? Was it impossible? Did they ask in vain? Did they ask for resurrection power in vain? Did they ask in vain for the Lord to make manifest His mercy? No, my friends. What a wonderful declaration of the gospel is in the chapter, how graciously opening up the truth of the blessing of God to His disciples. He "loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus", and though He delayed His coming, yet He made the blessing of His truth more manifest, and He spake the word to the joy of their heart. We read afterwards that Lazarus sat at meat at the table. O, my friends, what mercy is in the gospel, what encouragement to sinners who are brought to ask! That, my friends, is to the poorest, to the vilest, to the weakest. No respecting of persons in the grace of God. You may feel to be the most unworthy. Have you come sometimes like that? You are not strangers, some of you, to what it is to come to the house of God as the vilest sinner. O what a wonderful truth one of our poets speaks who knew this

The vilest sinner out of hell  
Who lives to feel his need  
Is welcome to the throne of grace  
The Saviour's blood to plead

To ask! "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

To have this is the earnest of heaven. It may not be the will of God to speak the fulness of pardon and peace - you cannot be satisfied short - but, my friends, the Lord sets forth here a truth, if I may speak it reverently, He is not angered at the petitions of poor sinners who beg for the Holy Spirit that that might be their blessing in the revelation of Christ. One says, though it is not in our hymnbook, but it is a wonderful truth

And if I die with mercy sought  
When I the King have tried,  
That were to die, delightful thought,  
As sinner never died

The Lord grant us grace to ask! What a mercy if we shall be amongst the disciples of Jesus who shall sing to the praise of His faithfulness! "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him," What a gift! "Without money and without price". Well might Isaiah proclaim this gospel, when he said, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." That is asking. The Lord grant it to us! And to you who, in the Spirit, are seeking for truth, the Lord give you an encouragement by His own Word and by this testimony of His goodness, of His faithfulness, of His mercy, that He will. Sometimes His Word, even though it may not be the time to bring you into the fulness of the joy, yet in the midst of much discouragement within your own spirit, to feel a little of the gospel encouraging and strengthening to continue to ask and to plead the promise, for the Lord has said "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him"

AMEN.