



# Be still.

*“Change me, Lord,  
from glory to glory,  
into Thine image,  
till glory come.”*

**“THOU SHALT MAKE  
THEM DRINK OF THE  
RIVER OF THY PLEASURES.”  
PSALM 36:8**

## Pray Until You Pray

**P**ray until you pray. That is Puritan advice. It does not simply mean that persistence should mark much of our praying—though admittedly that is a point the Scriptures repeatedly make. Even though he was praying in line with God’s promises, Elijah prayed for rain seven times before the first cloud appeared in the heavens. The Lord Jesus could tell parables urging persistence in prayer (Luke 11:5-13). If some generations needed to learn that God is not particularly impressed by long-winded prayers, and is not more disposed to help us just because we are garrulous, our generation needs to learn that God is not impressed by the kind of brevity that is nothing other than culpable negligence. He is not more disposed to help us because our insincerity and spiritual flightiness conspire to keep our prayers brief. Our generation certainly needs to learn something more about persistence in prayer. Even so, that is not quite what the Puritans meant when they exhorted one another to “pray until you pray.”



What they meant is that Christians should pray long enough and honestly enough, at a single session, to get past the feeling and the formalism and unreality that attends not a little praying. We are especially prone to such feelings when we pray for only a few minutes, rushing to be done with mere duty. To enter the spirit of prayer, we must stick to it for a while. **If we “pray until we pray,” eventually we come to delight in God’s presence, to rest in his love, to cherish his will.** Even in dark or

agonised praying, we somehow know we are doing business with God. In short, we discover a little of what Jude means when he exhorts his readers to “pray in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20) — which presumably means it is treacherously possible to pray *not* in the Spirit.

If God is the one “who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Phil. 2:13), then of course he is the God who by his Spirit helps us in our praying. Every Christian who has learned the rudiments of praying knows by experience at least a little of what this means. The Puritans knew a great deal of it. That is why they exhorted one another to “pray until you pray.” Such advice is not to become an excuse for a new legalism: there are startling examples of very short, rapid prayers in the Bible (e.g., Neh. 2:4). But in the Western world we urgently need this advice, for many of us in our praying are like nasty little boys who ring front door bells and run away before anyone answers.

*Pray until you pray.*

— CARSON

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# THE INNER CROSS

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from "The Prayer Life - a Guide to the Inner Chamber" by Andrew Murray

## THE CROSS SPIRIT IN OUR LORD

**W**e seek sometimes for the operation of the Spirit, with the object of obtaining more power for work, more love in the life, more holiness in the heart, more light on Scripture or on our path. **And yet all these gifts are only subordinate to what is the great purpose of God.** The Father has bestowed the Spirit on the Son, and the Son has given Him to us, **with the one great object of revealing and glorifying Christ Jesus Himself in us.**

The heavenly Christ must become for us a real living personality, always with us and in us. Our life on earth must be every day lived in the unbroken and holy fellowship of our Lord Jesus in heaven. This must be the first and the greatest work of the Holy Spirit in believers, that they should know and experience Christ as the life of their life. God desires that we should become strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith, and that so we may be filled with His love unto all the fullness of God. This was the secret of the joy of the first disciples. They had received the Lord Jesus, whom they feared they had lost, as the heavenly Christ into their hearts.

And this was their preparation for Pentecost: **they were entirely taken up with Him.** He was literally their all. Their hearts were empty of everything, so that the Spirit might fill them with Christ. In the fullness of the Spirit they had power for a life and service such as the Lord desired. **Is this, now, with us, the great object in our desires, in our prayers, in our experience?** The Lord teach us to know that the blessing for which we have so earnestly prayed can be preserved and increased in no other way than through **intimate fellowship with Christ in the inner chamber**, every day practiced and cultivated.

**And yet it has seemed to me that there was a still deeper secret of Pentecost to be discovered.** The thought came that perhaps our conception of the Lord Jesus in heaven was limited. We think of Him in the splendour, the glory of God's throne. We also think of the unsearchable love which moved Him to give Himself for us. But we forget too often that, above all, it is as the crucified One he was known here on earth; and that, above all, it is as the crucified One He has His place on the throne of God. "And lo, in the midst of the throne... stood a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6).

Yes, it is as the crucified One that He is the

object of the Father's eternal good pleasure and of the worship of the entire creation. And it is, therefore, of the first importance, that we here on earth should know and have experience of Him as the crucified One, so that we may make men see what His disposition and ours is, and what the power is that can make them partakers of salvation.

I feel deeply that, as the cross is Christ's highest

*"I am to feel that my life is under sentence of death, and that under the consciousness of this sentence I must constantly surrender my flesh, my sinful nature, to death."*

glory, and as the Holy Spirit neither has done nor can do anything greater or more glorious than he did when "he through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God"; so it is evident that the Holy Spirit can do nothing greater or more glorious for us than to take us up into the fellowship of that cross, and to work out in us the same spirit of the cross which was seen in our Lord Jesus. In a word, the question arose whether this was not the real reason why our prayers for the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit could not be answered, because **we had sought too little to receive the Spirit, in order that we might know and become like the glorified Christ in the fellowship of His cross.** Have we not here the deepest secret of Pentecost? The Spirit comes to us **from the cross**, where He strengthened Christ to offer Himself to God. He comes **from the Father**, who looked down with unspeakable good pleasure on the humiliation and obedience and self-sacrifice of Christ, as the highest proof of His surrender to Him. He comes **from Christ**, who through the cross was prepared to receive from the Father the fullness of the Spirit, that He might share it with the world. He comes to reveal **Christ to our hearts, as the Lamb slain, in the midst of the throne**, so that we on earth may worship Him as they do in heaven. He comes, chiefly, to impart to us the life of the crucified Christ, so that we may be able to say

truly, "I am crucified with Christ; I live, yet not I; Christ liveth in me."

**To understand this secret in any way, we must first meditate on what the meaning and what the worth of the cross is.**

## THE MIND THAT WAS IN THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST

The cross must necessarily be viewed from two standpoints. First, the work it has accomplished—the pardon and conquest of sin. This is the first message with which the cross comes to the sinner. It proclaims to him free and full deliverance from the power of sin. And then the second, the spirit or disposition which was there manifested. We find this expressed in Philippians 2:8: "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Here we see **self-abasement** to the lowest place which could be found under the burden of our sin and curse; **obedience** to the uttermost to all the will of God; **self-sacrifice** to the death of the cross—these three words reveal to us the holy perfection of His Person and work. Therefore God has so greatly exalted Him. It was the spirit of the cross which made Him the object of His Father's good pleasure, of the worship of the angels, of the love and confidence of all the redeemed. The self-abasement of Christ, His obedience to the will of God even to death, His self-sacrifice even to the death of the cross—these made Him to be "the Lamb, as it had been slain, standing in the midst of the throne."

## THE SPIRIT OF THE CROSS IN US

All that Christ was, He was for us and **desires to become in us.** The spirit of the cross was His blessedness and glory. It should be this even more for us. He desires to manifest His likeness in us and to give us a full share of all that is His. Thus Paul writes the words we have so often quoted: "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Elsewhere he writes: "We have the mind of Christ." The fellowship of the cross is not only a holy duty for us, but an unspeakably blessed privilege, which the Holy Spirit Himself will make ours according to the promise: "He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you", "He shall glorify me." The Holy Spirit wrought this disposition in Christ and will also work it in us.

## TAKING UP THE CROSS

When the Lord told His disciples that they must take up the cross and follow him, they could have little understanding of His meaning. He wished to rouse them to earnest thought and so prepare them for the time when they should see Him carrying His cross. From the Jordan,

where he had presented Himself to be baptized and reckoned among sinners, onward, He carried the cross always in His heart. That is to say, he was always conscious that the sentence of death, because of sin, rested on Him, and that he must bear it to the uttermost. As the disciples thought on this and wondered what he meant by it, one thing only helped them—it was the thought of a man who was sentenced to death, and carried his cross to the appointed place. Christ had said at the same time: “he that loseth his life shall find it.” He taught them that they must hate their own life. **Their nature was so sinful that nothing less than death could meet their need;** it deserved nothing less than death. So the conviction gradually dawned upon them that the taking up of the cross meant:

“I am to feel that my life is under sentence of death, and that under the consciousness of this sentence I must constantly surrender my flesh, my sinful nature, to death.”

So they were slowly prepared to see later on that the cross which Christ had carried was the one power to deliver truly from sin, and that they must first receive from Him the true cross spirit. They must learn from Him what self-humiliation in their weakness and unworthiness was to mean; **what the obedience was which did not seek to please the flesh or the world.** “Take thy cross and follow me”—that was the word with which Jesus prepared His disciples for the great thought that His mind and disposition might become theirs, that His cross might in very deed become their own.

#### CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

The lesson which the Lord wished His disciples to learn from His statement concerning the taking up of the cross and the losing of their life finds its expression in the words of Paul, after Christ had died on the cross and had been exalted on high, and the Spirit had been poured out. Paul says: “I am crucified with Christ... God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 2:20; 6:14). He wished every believer to live so as to prove that he was crucified with Christ. He wished us to understand that the Christ who comes to dwell in our hearts is the crucified Christ, who will Himself, through His life, impart to us the true mind of the cross. He tells us that “our old man is crucified with Him.” Yea, more that “they who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh.” When they received by faith the crucified Christ, they gave over the flesh to the death sentence which was executed to the full on Calvary. Paul says “we have been planted together in the likeness of his death” (Rom. 6:5), and that therefore we must reckon that we are dead to sin in Christ Jesus.

These words of the Holy Spirit, through Paul, teach us that we must abide constantly in the fellowship of the cross, in fellowship with the crucified and living Lord Jesus. **It is the soul that lives ever under the cover and shelter and**

**deliverance of the cross that alone can expect constantly to glory in Christ Jesus and His abiding nearness.**

#### THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CROSS

There are many who place their hope for salvation in the redemption of the cross who understand little about the fellowship of the cross. They rely on what the cross has purchased for them, on forgiveness of sin and peace with God; but they can often live for a length of time without fellowship with the Lord Himself. **They do not know what it means to strive every day after heart communion with the crucified Lord** as He is seen in heaven—“A Lamb in the midst of the throne.” Oh, that this vision might exercise its spiritual power upon us, that we might really experience every day that as truly as the Lamb is seen there on the throne, so we may have the power and experience of His presence here!

**Is it possible?** Without doubt it is. Why did that great miracle happen, and why was the Holy Spirit given from heaven, if it were not to make the glorified Jesus—“the Lamb standing, as slain, in the midst of the throne”—present with us here in our earthly surroundings? Let us endeavour to make this more plain in our further meditations.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CROSS

**The Holy Spirit ever leads us to the cross.** It was so with Christ. The Spirit taught Him and enabled Him to offer Himself without spot to God. It was so with the disciples. The Spirit, with Whom they were filled, led them to preach Christ as the crucified One. Later on He led them to glory in the fellowship of the cross when they were deemed worthy to suffer for Christ’s sake.

**And the cross directed them again to the Spirit.** When Christ had borne the cross, He received the Spirit from the Father, that He might be poured out. When the three thousand bowed before the crucified One, they received the promise of the Holy Spirit. When the disciples rejoiced in their experience of the fellowship of the cross, they received the Holy Spirit afresh. **The union between the Spirit and the cross is indissoluble; they belong inseparably to one another.** We see this especially in the epistles of Paul. “Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you... Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Gal. 3:1, 2).

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law... that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. 3:13, 14). “God sent his Son... to redeem them that were under the law... and... hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts” (Gal. 4:4-6). “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh... If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:24, 25). “Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ... that we should serve in newness of spirit” (Rom. 7:4-6). “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me

free from the law of sin and death. For... God... condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:2-4).

In everything and always the Spirit and the cross are inseparable. Yes, even in heaven. The Lamb, as it had been slain, standing in the midst of the throne had “seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” (Rev. 5:6). Again: “He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal [Is this other than the Holy Spirit?], proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1). When Moses smote the rock, the water streamed out and Israel drank. When the Rock Christ was actually smitten and He had taken His place as the slain Lamb on the throne of God, there flowed out from under the throne the fullness of the Holy Spirit for the whole world.

**How foolish it is to pray for the fullness of the Spirit if we have not first placed ourselves under the full power of the cross!** Just think of the one hundred and twenty disciples. The crucifixion of Christ had touched, broken and taken possession of their entire hearts. **They could speak or think of nothing else,** and when the crucified One had shown them His hands and His feet, He said unto them: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” And so also, with their hearts full of the crucified Christ, now received up into heaven, they were prepared to be filled with the Spirit. They dared to proclaim to the people: “Repent and believe in the crucified One”; and they also received the Holy Spirit.

Christ gave Himself up entirely to the cross. The disciples also did the same. **The cross demands this also from us; it would have our entire life.** To comply with this demand requires nothing less than a powerful act of the will, for which we are unfit, and a powerful act of God of which he may be assured who casts himself, in helplessness, but unreservedly on God.

#### THE CROSS AND THE SPIRIT

Why are there not more men and women who can witness, in the joy of their hearts, that the Spirit of God has taken possession of them and given them new power to witness for Him? Yet more urgently arises the heart-searching question to which an answer must be given: **What is it that hinders?** The Father in heaven is more willing than an earthly father to give bread to his child, and yet the cry arises: “Is the Spirit straitened? Is this His work?”

Many will acknowledge that the hindrance undoubtedly lies in the fact that the Church is too much under the sway of the flesh and the world. They understand too little of the heart-piercing power of the cross of Christ. So it comes to pass that the Spirit has not the vessels into which He can pour His fullness.

Many complain that the subject is too high or too deep for them. This is proof of how little we have appropriated and brought into practice the teaching of Paul and Christ about the cross. I bring you a message of joy: *The Spirit who is in*

*you, in however limited a measure, is prepared to take you under His teaching, to lead you to the cross, and by His heavenly instruction to make you know something of what the crucified Christ wills to do for you and in you.*

But then He wants you to take time, so that He may reveal the heavenly mysteries to you. He wants to make you see how the neglect of the inner chamber [the prayer life] has hindered fellowship with Christ, the knowledge of the cross, and the powerful operations of the Spirit. He will teach you what is meant by the denial of self, the taking up of your cross, the losing of your life, and following Him.

In spite of all that you have felt of your ignorance, and lack of spiritual insight and fellowship with the cross, He is able and willing to take you under His teaching and to make known to you the secret of the spiritual life above all your expectations.

**Begin at the beginning. Be faithful in the inner chamber.** Thank Him that you can reckon on Him to meet you there. Although everything appears cold, and dark, and strained, bow in silence before the loving Lord Jesus, who so longs after you. Thank the Father that He has given you the Spirit. And be assured that all you do not yet know, and still must know—about “the flesh,” and “the world,” and the cross—the Spirit of Christ, who is in you, will surely make known to you. **O soul, in only believe that this blessing is for you!** Christ belongs entirely to you. He longs to obtain full possession of you. He can and will possess you through the Holy Spirit. But for this, time is necessary. Oh, give Him time in the inner chamber every day. You can rest assured that He will fulfill His promise in you. “He that loveth me keepeth my commandments, and my Father will love him, and **I will manifest myself to him.**”

Persevere, in addition to all that you ask for yourself, in prayer for your congregation, your church, your minister; for all believers; for the whole Church of God, that God may strengthen them with power through His Spirit, so that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith. Blessed time when the answer comes! Continue in prayer. The Spirit will reveal and glorify Christ and His love, Christ and His cross “as the Lamb slain standing in the midst of the throne.”

#### THE CROSS AND THE FLESH

These two are deadly enemies. The cross desires to condemn and put to death “the flesh”. “The flesh” desires to cast aside and conquer the cross. **Many, as they hear of the cross as the indispensable preparation for the fullness of**

**the Holy Spirit, will find out what there is in them which must yet be crucified.** We must understand that our entire nature is sentenced to death and become dead by the cross, so that the new life in Christ may come to rule in us. We must obtain such an insight into the fallen condition of our nature and its enmity against God that we become willing, nay desirous, to be wholly freed from it.

We must learn to say with Paul: “In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” “The mind of the flesh in enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” It is its very essence to hate God and His holy law. This is the wonder of redemption, that Christ has borne on the cross the judgment and curse of God on “the flesh,” and has forever nailed it to the cursed tree. If a man only believes God’s Word about this “cursed mind of the flesh,” and longs to be delivered from it, he learns to love the cross as his deliverer from the power of the enemy.

“Our old man is crucified” with Christ, and our one hope is to receive this by faith and to hold it fast. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh.” They have willingly declared that they will daily regard “the flesh” which is in them as the enemy of God, the enemy of Christ, the enemy of their soul’s salvation, and will treat it as having received its deserved reward in being nailed to the cross.

This is one part of the eternal redemption which Christ has brought to us. It is not something which we can grasp with our understanding or accomplish with our strength. **It is something which the Lord Jesus Himself will give us** if we are willing to abide in His fellowship day by day, and to receive everything from Him. **It is something which the Holy Spirit will teach us,** and He will impart it to us as an experience, and will show how He can give victory in the power of the cross over all that is of the flesh.

#### THE CROSS AND THE WORLD

What the flesh is in the smallest circle of my own person, that the world is in the larger circle of mankind. “The flesh” and “the world” are two manifestations of the same “god of this world” who is served by both. When the cross deals with “the flesh” as accursed, we at once discover what the nature and power of the world are. “They hated both me and my Father.” The proof of this was that they crucified Christ. But Christ obtained the victory on the cross and freed us from the power of “the world,” and now we can say: “God forbid that I should glory, save

in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” The cross was to Paul every day a holy reality, both in what he had to suffer from the world and in the victory which the cross constantly gave. John also writes: “The whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ... And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth” (1 John 5: 5, 6). Against the two great powers of the god of this world, God has given us two great powers from heaven, namely, the cross and the Spirit.

#### A TESTIMONY

Our Head Christ took the lowest place on the cross, and so He has marked out for us His members the lowest place. The brightness of God’s glory (Heb. 1:3) became the rejected of men (Isa. 53:4). Since that time the only right we have is to be the last and the lowest. When we claim anything more we have not yet rightly understood the cross.

**We seek for a higher life;** we shall find it if we sink deeper into the cross fellowship with our Lord. God has given the crucified One the highest place (Rev. 5). Shall we not do the same? We do this when from hour to hour we act as those who are crucified with Him (Gal. 2: 19, 20). Thus we honour the crucified Lord.

**We long for full victory.** We find this as we more fully enter into the fellowship of His cross. The Lamb obtained His greatest victory with His hands and His feet nailed to the cross. We abide in the shadow of the Almighty only so long as we abide under the shadow of the cross. The cross must be our home. There alone are we sheltered. We first understand our own cross when we have understood His. And we desire to get so close to it that we not only view it but touch it, yes, still more that we take up the cross, and so it becomes as someone has said, an inner cross. Then the cross asserts itself in us, and we experience His power which especially manifests itself in this, that we do not faint under it but carry it with joy.

What would Jesus be without His cross? His pierced feet have bruised the head of the enemy, and His pierced hands have despoiled Him utterly (Matt. 12: 29). What are we without the cross? Do not let the cross go but hold it fast. Do we think that we can go by another road than that He trod? Many can make no progress because they will not take up the cross. ■

## THE POSSIBILITIES OF PRAYER

The Comforter plants Himself not in the waste of the mountain nor far into the night, but in the chill and the night of the human heart, to rouse it to the struggle, and to teach it the need and form of prayer. How the Divine Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, puts into the human heart the burden of earth’s almighty need, and makes the human lips give voice to its mute and unutterable groanings! What a mighty Christ of prayer is the Holy Spirit! How He quenches every flame in the heart but the flame of heavenly desire! How He quiets, like a weaned child, all the self-will, until in will, in brain, and in heart, and by mouth, we pray only as He prays: “making intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.” — E. M. BOUNDS