

Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying Message Four : Praying Persistently with God as Our Faith

I. Overview:

In Mark 11:20-24 the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray by faith for executing God's will according to God's economy. Faith is believing that we have received what we have asked for, and believing that God has done that thing already. A prayer with authority does not ask God to do something; instead, it exercises God's authority and applies this authority to deal with problems and things that ought to be removed. The church can have such a prayer with authority by having full faith. In Luke 18:1-8 the Lord Jesus told the disciples a parable "to the end that they ought always to pray and not lose heart". The widow in verse 3 signifies the believers; in a sense, the believers in Christ are a widow in the present age because their Husband, Christ, is apparently absent from them. During this time His children were unrighteously persecuted, so they prayed persistently, bothering Him again and again, for He will carry out quickly the avenging of His chosen ones. The faith that brought us into a life union with Christ is the linking faith, which is the faith of prayer.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound the Lord's teaching on prayer in Mark 11:20-24.

The Lord's teaching on prayer here is according to God's will for the accomplishment of His economy. Christ is the only One who is absolutely right before God. To pray such a prayer we must be right persons doing God's will. We should be those who are carrying out God's will to take care of the producing and building up of the Body of Christ that will consummate the New Jerusalem.

B. Explain what it means to have faith in God according to Mark 11:22.

The praying one could have faith in God without doubting, but believing that he had received what he asked for, and he would have it. The praying one is now one with God, in union with God. He is mingled with God, so God becomes his faith. This is what it means to have faith in God, according to the Lord's word in Mark 11:22.

Day 2 —

A. Explain Mark 11:23-24 mentioning the prayer with authority.

These two verses mentioned concerning prayer, but here does not sound like an ordinary prayer. The Lord told us to turn toward the mountain, telling it to be cast into the sea. This prayer is not directed toward God, but it is a prayer. It is a speaking directed toward the mountain that says, "Be taken up and cast into the sea." Yet this is also a prayer. This is a prayer with authority.

B. State concerning a prayer with authority.

There is a great difference between asking God to remove the mountain and commanding the mountain to be removed. A prayer with authority is one in which we tell the things that are frustrating us to go away. We can say to our temper, "Go away." I will rise up by the resurrection life of the Lord." This word is not spoken to God but directly to the mountain. "Be taken up and cast into the sea." This is a prayer with authority.

Day 3 —

A. Expound what reveals to us in Luke 18:3.

The widow in Luke 18:3 signifies the believers. In a sense, the believers in Christ are a widow in the present age because their Husband Christ is absent from them. In verse 3 the widow asked the judge to avenge her of her opponent. In this parable the Lord indicates that the believers in Christ have an opponent. This opponent is Satan, the devil, concerning whom we need God's avenging. We ought to pray persistently for this avenging.

B. Explain how the Lord will avenge His chosen ones.

According to Luke 18:4, the judge for a time would not avenge the widow. Then he said within himself, "Even though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow causes me trouble, I will avenge her, lest by continually coming she wear me out". Following this, the Lord went on to say, "And will not God by all means carry out the avenging of His chosen ones, who cry to Him day and night, though He is long-suffering over them?"

Day 4 —

A. Expound why those who are faithful followers of the Lord are suffering persecution.

Often the children of those who are faithful followers of the Lord ask their parents why they are suffering persecution. It seems to the children that the Lord whom their parents follow is not righteous. The parable in Luke 18 answers our question. When our Husband is apparently absent and we are left on earth as a widow, temporarily our God seems to be an unrighteous judge. But we still must appeal to Him, pray persistently, and bother Him again and again.

B. Explain how it reveals that He is the sovereign Lord in the parable of Luke 18.

We need to be careful in understanding a parable such as the one recorded in 18. On the one hand, this parable indicates that the Judge is sovereign. This means that whether or not He judges is up to Him. Seemingly without reason, He may either listen to the widow or not listen to her. This parable reveals that He is the sovereign Lord and that He judges whenever He chooses.

Day 5 —

A. Explain the persistent prayer by the souls of the martyred saints in Revelation 6:9-10.

In Revelation 6:9 and 10 we see that the kind of persistent prayer is carried out by the souls of the martyred saints. Here we see that the souls of the martyred saints are crying out, "How long, O Master, holy and true? How can You tolerate the unrighteous persecution that is still taking place on earth? How long, O Lord, how long?" This is the prayer from the unseen realm, the prayer from the martyred saints in Paradise.

B. Why is Revelation 8:5 the fulfilment of prayer from the martyred saints in 6:9-10?

Revelation 8:5 says, "And the Angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar and cast it to the earth; and there were thunders and voices and lightnings and an earthquake." This implies the answer to the prayers of the saints, especially the prayer in the fifth seal mentioned in 6:9-10 and the prayer mentioned in Luke 18:7-8. The answer to the saints' prayers is the execution of God's judgment upon the earth by the following seven trumpets.

Day 6 —

A. Explain how rich the linking faith brings us.

When we heard the preaching of the gospel, that is, the word of Christ. Through that hearing of the word, faith came into us. This faith brought us into a life union with Christ. This union is a kind of linking. The first issue of the abounding of the divine grace is the linking faith, which is the living God moving in us to link us to all His unsearchable riches.

B. Expound what significance of the faith in Luke 18:8 is.

Today the entire world is unbelieving. We have been brought into a situation of learning not to trust in ourselves for anything, but to believe that our God is everything. When the Lord comes back He can find you and me as the believing ones, who always trust in Him, not in ourselves. This is the linking faith. This faith qualifies the overcomers. It is the divine requirement for you and me.

III. Conclusion:

Luke 18:8 says, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" This kind of faith is the persistent faith out of persistent prayer, just like the widow's faith. Therefore, this is subjective faith, not objective faith. At the end of this age, men will rebel greatly against God, and many unrighteous and lawless things will become more and more frequently. Faithful saints will be forced to pray, saying, Lord! How long will you have to wait before you come to vindicate yourself and avenge us? When we pray in this way, the Angel sent by God will take Him as incense to offer with our prayers to God. God will answer this prayer, and there will be thunders, voices, lightnings, and an earthquake. It was only the beginning of God's judgment on this earth which opposes God. Today is the time for us to rise up to pray persistently, not to be discouraged, and to wear Him out continually.