

Message Four

Praying Persistently with God as Our Faith

Scripture Reading: Mark 11:20-24; Luke 18:1-8; Rev. 8:3-5

I. 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:

- A. When the praying one is mingled with God and is one with God, God becomes his faith; this is what it means to have faith in God—v. 22.
- B. Only prayers that are out of faith will touch God; without faith prayer is ineffectual—v. 23.
- C. Faith is believing that we have received what we have asked for—v. 24:
 - 1. According to the Lord's word, we should believe that we have received, not that we will receive.
 - 2. To hope means to expect something in the future; to believe means to consider something as having been done.
 - 3. Faith is not only believing that God can or will do a certain thing but also believing that God has done that thing already.
- D. The prayer in Mark 11:20-24 is a prayer with authority; this kind of prayer is directed not toward God but toward "this mountain"—v. 23:
 - 1. 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—Zech. 4:7; Matt. 21:21.
 - 2. God has commissioned us to command what He has commanded and give orders to what He has given orders to—17:20.
 - 3. A prayer with authority is one in which we tell the things that are frustrating us to go away.
 - 4. The church can have such a prayer with authority by having full faith, being without doubt, and being clear that what we do is fully according to God's will—6:10; 18:19-20.
 - 5. Prayer with authority has much to do with the overcomers; every overcomer must learn to speak to "this mountain"—Mark 11:23.

II. 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"—v. 1:

- A. The significance of this parable is profound, and we need to know God as He is revealed here—vv. 7-8.
- B. 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—2 Cor. 11:2.
- C. Like the widow in the parable (Luke 18:3), we believers in Christ have an opponent, Satan the devil, concerning whom we need God's avenging:
 - 1. This parable indicates the suffering we have from our opponent during the Lord's apparent absence.
 - 2. During His apparent absence, we are a widow whose opponent is troubling her all the time.

- D. While our opponent is persecuting us, it seems that our God is not righteous, for He allows His children to be unrighteously persecuted—1 Pet. 2:20; 3:14, 17; 4:13-16, 19:
1. Throughout the centuries, thousands upon thousands of honest and faithful followers of the Lord Jesus have suffered unrighteous persecution; even today many are undergoing unrighteous treatment—Rev. 2:8-10.
 2. Our God seems to be unjust, since He does not come in to judge and vindicate; because of this situation, the Lord Jesus used an unjust judge to signify God, who does not seem to do anything on behalf of His persecuted people—Luke 18:2-6:
 - a. Our God is a God who hides Himself (Isa. 45:15), as the book of Esther indicates.
 - b. We need to realize that the omnipotent and omnipresent God whom we serve hides Himself, especially when He is helping us—John 14:26; Rom. 8:26.
 - c. We cannot see Him, and apparently, He is not doing anything; actually, in a hidden way He is doing many things for us—vv. 28, 34; Esth. 4:14.
- E. The widow in the parable kept coming to the unrighteous judge and asking him to avenge her of her opponent; we ought to pray persistently for this avenging and should not lose heart—Luke 18:1, 3:
1. When our Husband is apparently absent and we are left on earth as a widow, temporarily our God seems to be an unrighteous judge—v. 6.
 2. Although He appears to be unrighteous, we still must appeal to Him, pray persistently, and bother Him again and again, for He will carry out quickly the avenging of His chosen ones, who “cry to Him day and night”—vv. 7-8a.
- F. Revelation 8:5 implies the answer to 6:9-11 and Luke 18:7-8:
1. The prayer of the saints in Revelation 8:3-4 must be for the judgment of the earth, which opposes God’s economy.
 2. God’s judgment upon the earth—casting fire to the earth—is the answer to the prayers of the saints with Christ as the incense—vv. 3-5.
- G. “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”—Luke 18:8b:
1. Literally, the Greek words rendered “faith” mean “the faith”; this denotes the persistent faith for our persistent prayer, like that of the widow.
 2. The faith through which we were saved is the initial stage of faith; the faith that brought us into a life union with Christ is the linking faith—the faith that comes into us through our contacting the Triune God continually so that we may live by the Son of God—Rom. 1:17; Gal. 2:20; John 14:19.
 3. The linking faith is the divine requirement for the overcomers to meet Christ in His triumphant return—Luke 18:8b:
 - a. Linking faith is the Triune God moving in us to link us to His unsearchable riches—Eph. 3:8.
 - b. Linking faith is the faith of the believers who have no trust in themselves; rather, their trust is in God—2 Cor. 1:9.
 - c. When the Lord Jesus returns, He will find a number of overcomers who are living by the linking faith and will regard them as treasures for His kingdom in the thousand years of His reign—Luke 18:8b; Rev. 20:4, 6.