

The Power of Persistent Prayer II

March 29, 2020

Scripture reading: Luke 18:1-8

Text: *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him” (1 John 5:14-15 NIV).*

In the March 22nd sermon we read about one of the most important tasks and responsibilities in our Christian life, **prayer**. The passage from the Scriptures was about an unjust judge and a persistent widow. Jesus taught us with this parable that we should always pray and not give up. This is especially an important teaching in this time of trial we are in nowadays, that has an effect on every area of our lives, when many people have fear and worries due to the spread of the coronavirus.

It may seem that God does not give an answer to our prayers. Maybe you think it right now that you are praying for the end of the spread of this virus but nothing really happens. Yes, it may happen that the answer does not come immediately to our prayers. We have to wait. Many times I myself don't know and understand why. However, Christ had a great purpose with sharing the parable of *The Persistent Widow*. Jesus exhorts us to remain persistent, to go before our heavenly Father in supplication, again and again, and not give up praying. The Lord encourages us in His word and He says: *“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unchangeable things you do not know.” (Jer. 33:3)* Our text says this: *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us –whatever we ask– we know that we have what we asked of him.” (1John 5:14-15)* God hears the prayers of His people. Therefore it is very important to pray, and do it persistently and never give up.

In this sermon I would like to share with you three practical aspects, three simple ways that will help our prayer life be more effective and fruitful:

1. Be committed to prayer. The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:17: *“Pray continually.”* Or in another Bible translation it says: *“Pray without ceasing.”* It means continual prayer, again and again, rather than continuous, non-stop prayer that we would not be able to do, anyway. Continuous prayer means to be ready, to be on guard, to be watchful. Wherever you go and whatever you do be always ready to pray. You know, prayer is more than a holy obligation. It is a great possibility. I am convinced that everything rises and falls on prayer.

Additionally, prayer is a great opportunity to express our intimate relationship with our heavenly Father. Those who don't pray and read the Bible on a regular basis, they don't have a true and living relationship with the Lord God. So being committed in prayer expresses a fruitful relationship with the heavenly Father and it also contains continuity. This leads us to the next essential point.

2. Being consistent in prayer. It is important not to grow weary or faint in prayer, and not to become discouraged. Jesus encouraged His followers to pray and not to lose heart during the

times when the answer is delayed. If we don't get an answer to our prayers right away, let us not give up, keep on praying and don't lose heart! God will move in His time! However, do we have faith in it?

In the last verse of the parable of *The Persistent Widow* Jesus calls our attention exactly to this. He says: "*When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?*" (v.8) Will He find those among His people who remain persistent in prayer and faith in Him? If we are committed and consistent in prayer then Jesus will surely find faith when He returns. May the Lord give you His grace to remain faithful in prayer.

3. Finally, the last practical aspect is to trusting God's promises when you pray. Whatever happens we can count on the Lord that He will keep every promise He has ever made. He will be faithful to honor His word to us and fulfill them.

If you think you want to give up praying then I encourage you to keep on praying and believe that His answer is on the way! It's His promise! Jesus said: "*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you*" (Jn.15:7). "*In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name*" (Jn.16:23). "*If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer*" (Mt.21:22). "*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened*" (Mt.7:7-8).

Dearly beloved, Jesus told the parable about the unjust judge and the persistent widow so that we might be encouraged. The widow was persistent, she did not give up, and had faith. And finally the unjust judge gave her what was hers by right.

May God bless you in your prayer life! Know that it's not in vain to pray again and again. The answer is on the way! The Lord will act according to His promises. Amen.

Yours in Christ,
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