

**A TIMELY WORD CONCERNING  
THE WORLD SITUATION AND THE LORD'S RECOVERY , Week 4**

**Praying Persistently with God as Our Faith**

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

- Mark 11:20 And as they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots.
- Mark 11:22 And Peter remembered and said to Him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.
- Mark 11:22 And Jesus answered and said to them, Have faith in God.
- Mark 11:23 Truly I say to you that **whoever says to this mountain, Be taken up and cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says happens, he will have it.**
- Mark 11:24 For this reason I say to you, All things that you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and you will have them.
- Luke 18:1 And He told them a parable to the end that **they ought always to pray and not lose heart,**
- Luke 18:2 Saying, There was a certain judge in a certain city who did not fear God and did not regard man.
- Luke 18:3 And there was a widow in that city, and **she kept coming to him,** saying, Avenge me of my opponent.
- Luke 18:4 **And for a time he would not;** but afterward he said within himself, Even though I do not fear God nor regard man,
- Luke 18:5 Yet because this widow causes me trouble, I will avenge her, lest by continually coming she wear me out.
- Luke 18:6 And the Lord said, **Hear what the unrighteous judge says.**
- Luke 18:7 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?
- Luke 18:8 I tell you that He will carry out their avenging quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?
- Rev 8:3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and **much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.**
- Rev 8:4 And **the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God.**
- Rev 8:5 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.

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. The One who taught the disciples to pray by faith was the God-man, Christ. To pray such a prayer we must be **right persons doing God's will**. This is God's will not in small matters, such as where we should move, but **His great will for the accomplishment of God's economy**.... We should be those who are carrying out God's will to accomplish God's economy.... The real will of God that we have to carry out...is to take care of the producing and building up of God's organism, which is the Body of Christ that will consummate the New Jerusalem.

(CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 3, "The God-man Living," p.578)

**Day 1**

**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.**

**Day 2**

- 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.

**FAITH**

The promise of **Mark 11:24** is very comprehensive. It is one of the biggest verses in the Bible. John 3:16 speaks of "every one," but this verse speaks of "all things." John 3:16 tells us that "every one who believes into Him...would have eternal life"; **Mark 11:24** tells us that "all things that you pray and ask...you will have them." This is a very comprehensive verse; "all things" includes everything. But this verse has a condition: **we must believe**. If we do not have faith, we cannot have what we ask for. This verse not only tells us of the **necessity of faith** but also the nature of faith. As far as I can tell, this is the only verse which tells us of the nature of faith.

What is the nature of faith? What should we believe? When we see something spiritual and reach for it, how should we believe? I am not here dealing with the necessity of faith—this is apparent. The question is about how to believe, and this is the only verse which answers this question. "Believe that you have received them, and you will have them." How should we believe? "Believe that you have received." **The way to believe** is not that we will receive or can receive or that we are able to receive or are going to receive, but **that we already have received**. Faith is that we have received, not that we will receive one day. There is nothing so wrong as believing with all our heart that we can receive or that we are going to receive. This is hope, not faith. **Faith refers to the past**, it has nothing to do with the future. **What is in the future is always hope, not faith**. Our Lord did not say, "You must believe that you are going to receive." On the contrary, He said, "You must believe that you have already received." It is something already done by God, something given to us by God. Whenever our faith is in the future, it is not faith but hope.

*(Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 2) Vol. 46: Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship (6), chapter 22, section 1)*

**Day 3 & Day 4****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.

**Day 5**

- 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.

**Day 6**

- 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.

**A CONCLUDING WORD**

...Right after we have received Christ into us as our Savior and life by being attracted by Him, the divine grace, which is the consummated Triune God, begins to abound in us. 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. This linking faith is the measure according to which God dispenses into us His super abounding grace to meet our need (Rom. 12:3). Such a faith is the indicator of the living of the Christ-pursuing God-man, which is the real expression of the consummated God in Christ as His embodiment for the building up of the organic Body of Christ to be the organism of the consummated Triune God. So, such a faith constitutes the overcomers for the satisfaction of Christ's desire. Thus, this overcoming faith qualifies the Lord's overcomers, who are waiting for and eagerly expecting the coming back of the Lord, who will find them at His coming as men of His linking faith (Luke 18:8), as treasures for His kingdom in the thousand years of His reign.

This is the ultimate fulfillment of **Romans 1:17**, that "*the righteous shall have life and live by faith.*" The **righteous** shall have **life** and live by **faith**! This word should be the banner of God's eternal economy, which is altogether a matter in faith (1 Tim. 1:4).

The **righteous**, those who are absolutely right before God and before man, shall have life, the divine life. Then, how can we, the vile sinners, have the divine life of the righteous God according to His righteousness? **By faith!** It is by faith, which is the moving and working God in Christ who puts us into Christ as our righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30), **that we, the sinners, have the divine life** according to God's righteousness judicially. By this **linking faith** we are linked to God in Christ to participate in all that the all-inclusive Christ is, has, and has attained to, for the producing of the organic members of Christ to constitute and build up His organic Body, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the enlargement and expression of the eternal Triune God in His unlimited glory in the mysterious mingling of divinity with humanity for eternity (Rev. 21:2—22:5). This is the eternal fulfillment of the gospel in **Romans 1:17**, that "*the righteous shall have life and live by faith.*"

*(Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 11, section 4)*