

Pastor Writes

Greetings to you! The theme for our morning's meditation is, 'Perseverance in Prayer'. Jesus was teaching his disciples using a parable about the need to pray always and to be persistent. The context is one where the disciples feel rejected and feel the hostility all around. The challenge is for the faithful to pray not only in regards to God's intervention in history, but also to seek him whenever he seems to be far away and the confidence of the believers wavers. The remedy for fear is prayer. Jesus shows the importance of persistent prayer through the following parable.

Jesus begins the parable about a judge who neither fears God nor was ashamed of anybody. West Asian traditional culture is shame-pride culture. Parents tend to appeal to shame rather than to right or wrong. The criticism is normally 'shame on you for doing that'. Here was a judge who had no sense of shame nor was he one who feared God. The judges were to judge on the Lord's behalf with the fear of the Lord upon them showing no partiality. The picture is of a very difficult man, so no one can appeal, 'for God's sake' or 'for the widow's sake don't do that'. The only influence on that man was a bribe.

It is in this context that there was a widow in the city who kept coming and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary'. The widow in the OT is a typical symbol of the innocent, powerless and the oppressed. In Isaiah 1: 17 the prophet calls on the rulers and the people to plead for the widow. She had neither a protector to coerce, nor money to bribe. The widow is in the right and has been denied justice. For a while the judge refused, and afterward he said to himself, 'though I neither fear God, nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not come and attack me. The judge introspects and says that even though I don't fear God or respect man this woman will give me a black eye with her constant badgering. Because of this the unjust judge decides to give her justice.

Jesus then says that if the unrighteous judge knows to give justice, how much more will God give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night. In other words God will answer those who cry out to him. Jesus however asks whether people will be faithful till the end. The challenge is that we are called to pray without ceasing. Persistent prayer is essential.

In the next passage from Ephesians chapter six Paul challenges the believers to put on the full armour of God, so that we can stand against the devil's schemes because our struggle is against the rulers, authorities and powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Paul is therefore re-emphasizing that our battle is not against flesh and blood but against evil forces.

Paul therefore asks them to put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet fitted with the gospel of peace, the shield of faith to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of the God. Paul then asks the believers to pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. The focus is again on praying without ceasing. In the last three verses Paul uses the word pray/er four times. He asks the believers to pray in the Spirit promoted and guided by the Spirit both regularly and constantly with perseverance. Prayer is the source of victory for every situation. God wants us to seek his face and ask him for all our needs and for justice which he will surely answer. May we be people who will always persevere in prayer.

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