

## **PERSEVERE IN PRAYER**

(Luke 18:1-8)

Do you find it difficult to persevere in prayer? Persisting in prayer is a common struggle among the people of God. Scripture is replete with records of believers striving to be steadfast in prayer (Habakkuk 1:2; Psalm 69:1-3,17,20). Despite the struggle, God calls us to persevere in prayer so that we may endure in our faith until the return of Christ. The Lord commands us to pray without ceasing, be faithful in prayer, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication and to continue earnestly in prayer (1 Thess. 5:17; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2). Reflecting from a parable about prayer taught by our Lord Jesus to His disciples, let's consider two vital reasons why we must persevere in prayer.

### **1. Prayer \_\_\_\_\_ as we wait for Christ's return.**

The context of Jesus's parable is the instruction of our Lord concerning the spiritual danger every generation of believers faces prior to Christ's return. In light of the rampant wickedness, tribulations, afflictions, persecution, apostasy and godlessness in the last days, we are all prone to lose heart and grow cold in our Christian faith (Luke 17:26-30; Matthew 24:9-13; 2 Timothy 3:1-4). We are then exhorted to persevere in prayer because prayer is God's ordained means of grace to sustain, preserve and strengthen our faith until the return of Christ (Luke 18:1). The discipline of watchful and vigilant prayer is the key to a vibrant faith. Perseverance in prayer and the strength of our faith are inseparable (Matthew 26:40-41; 1 Peter 4:7; 5:8).

### **2. Prayer \_\_\_\_\_ of God's character.**

The design of Jesus's parable is to contrast the character of our righteous God with the character of the unrighteous judge. Our Lord uses the illustration of the indifferent and unconcerned judge who reluctantly and finally granted the request of a destitute widow who persistently appealed for justice against her adversary (Luke 18:2-5). The parable's argument is this: If the unjust judge, out of his selfish motive, is compelled to grant the petition of the helpless widow, how much more will our righteous God, out of His loving heart, heed the fervent prayers and supplication of His people? Hence, our earnest prayers deepen and grow our understanding and appreciation of these following attributes of God:

#### **a. God is perfectly \_\_\_\_\_.**

As a God of perfect justice, our Lord constantly does what is right and always judges according to His holy and righteous standard. Upon His return, Christ will vindicate His people, execute perfect judgment and eradicate all injustice and wickedness (Luke 18:6-7; 2 Thess. 1:5-10).

#### **b. God is perfectly \_\_\_\_\_.**

God's response to the prayers of His people is always ready and according to His divine timetable (Luke 18:7-8). What seems to be a delay of Christ's second coming is actually a manifestation of God's patience, resulting in repentance and salvation of His people (2 Pet. 3:8-9).

#### **c. God is perfectly \_\_\_\_\_.**

Our Lord Jesus uses the word "elect" to describe God's loving relationship with His chosen people (Luke 18:7). Our loving God delights in listening to the prayers of His precious people who persevere in prayer and eagerly wait for Christ's return (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Hebrews 4:16; 10:19; 1 John 2:1; Proverbs 15:29; Psalm 1-3,6; Luke 18:8; Revelation 22:20).

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