
Church in Campbell Weekly News

June 26, 2011

Issue 11- 25

LIFE-STUDY OF COLOSSIANS -MESSAGE 65: PERSEVERING IN PRAYER

In 4:2 Paul charges us, "Persevere in prayer." To persevere in prayer is to continue persistently, steadfastly, and earnestly.

As human beings, we all persevere in certain matters, often in negative things. In married life a husband and wife may persevere in the exchange of words. Once an argument begins, neither the husband nor the wife may be willing to give in. During my many years in the church life, I have observed many cases where the saints persevered in the expression of their ideas, concepts, or opinions. No matter what the situation, they were not willing to change their opinion. These negative examples show that we do know what it means to persevere.

PRAYER AND WARFARE

Although the battle raging in the universe is between God and Satan, another party is involved. This third party consists of God's chosen and redeemed people, the ones who will actually decide the outcome of the battle. If we take sides with Satan, God will lose, even though He is almighty. As the infinite, all-powerful Creator, God will not lower Himself to fight against one of His creatures. Thus, it is necessary for another of God's creatures—man—to fight against Satan. In a very real sense, God needs us. Without us, He would not have a way to carry on the battle against Satan. He must maintain His status as the Creator. For this reason, He needs us to carry on the actual work of warfare.

In order to fight on God's side against Satan, we need to persevere in prayer. This perseverance is needed because the course of the whole world is away from God. To pray is to go against the current, the trend, in the fallen universe. Persevering in prayer is like rowing a boat upstream. If you do not persevere, you will be carried downstream by the current. No doubt, to persevere in this way, either in rowing or in praying, requires a great deal of energy. The entire universe is under Satan's influence and is contrary to God's will. Hence, there is a strong current in the world in opposition to the will of God. As those who take sides with God, we find that the whole universe is against us and, in particular, against our prayer.

Many of the experiences we have with respect to prayer day by day prove that Satan opposes our prayer in every way possible. For example, a telephone call may come just when you are at a very important point in your prayer. You have prayed yourself into the Spirit, and you are touching the heavens. Then, at that very moment, the telephone may ring. You may answer the telephone only to learn that someone has dialed the wrong number. Your praying spirit may be seriously damaged by the irritation this causes you. When we try to pray, we may also be disturbed by our children, by callers at the door, or by any animal pets there may be in the house. Because there is so much resistance to our prayer, we definitely need to persevere in prayer.

A VOW CONCERNING OUR PRAYER LIFE

In light of the fact that there is great resistance to praying, let us now consider in a very practical way how to persevere in prayer. Before you try to persevere in prayer, you should first make a deal with the Lord concerning your prayer life. Pray to Him in a definite way and say, "Lord, I mean business with You about this matter of prayer. I call heaven and earth to witness that from this time forth I will have a life of prayer. I will not be a prayerless person. Rather, I will be a praying person." If you do not have such a prayer to the Lord, you will not be able to persevere in prayer. We need to say to Him, "Lord, I am desperate about this. I offer myself to You so that I may have a prayer life. Lord, keep me in the spirit of prayer. If I forget this or neglect this, I know that You will not forget it. Remind me again and again about prayer." This kind of prayer may be regarded as a vow made to the Lord. We all need to make a vow to Him concerning our prayer life. We should tell the Lord, "Lord, I know that if I forget this vow, You will not forget it. From the very beginning, Lord, I want to clearly hand the responsibility over to You. Lord, don't let me go. Remind me to pray."

SETTING ASIDE DEFINITE TIMES

After we make such a deal with the Lord concerning prayer, we should set aside definite times for prayer. For instance, you may reserve ten minutes every morning. During this time, prayer must be the top priority. Our attitude should be that prayer is our most important business and that nothing should be allowed to interfere with it. If we do not have this attitude, we shall not be able to have a successful prayer life. No matter how many things we have to do each day, we can reserve at least a few minutes here and there for prayer. We may pray a little in the morning. Then again at noon, after work, and in the evening we may have other times for prayer. By setting aside definite times during the day, we may be able to have a half hour reserved for prayer.

When you are observing a set time for prayer at home, take the telephone off the hook. This will help eliminate distractions. Prayer time is not the time for telephone calls. Furthermore, you should not pay attention to those knocking at your door. The time you have dedicated to the Lord for prayer should be used only for prayer, not for anything else. Regarding this, you need to be strong and persevering.

THE BENEFITS OF PRAYER

Persevering in prayer has many benefits. By prayer we set our mind on the things above. In fact, prayer is the only way to have our mind set on the things in heaven. When we set our mind on things above by praying, we shall not pray for trivial matters. Instead, our prayer will be occupied with Christ's heavenly intercession, ministry, and administration. Because Christ is interceding for the churches around the world, we also pray for the churches. Let the Lord take care of all the small matters in our living. Our responsibility is to seek first the kingdom of God and God's righteousness. Since the Father knows our need, He will take care of us and meet our need.

When we set our mind on the things above during our times of prayer, we become a reflection of Christ's ministry in the heavens. Through our prayer, Christ, the Head, is given a way to carry out His administration through His Body. When we pray, we are a heavenly ambassador on earth with the extension of God's kingdom. However, when we are gossiping, we are not a heavenly ambassador at all. Only when we pray do we become an ambassador of the heavenly kingdom on earth in a practical way.

When we pray, we enter into the Holy of Holies and approach the throne of grace. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace for timely help." Prayer is the way to come forward to the throne of grace. Coming forward to the throne of grace, we receive mercy and grace to meet our timely need. When we pray, approaching the throne of grace, mercy and grace will become a river flowing in us and supplying us. How rewarding this is! Receiving the flow of grace in prayer is actually more important than having our prayers answered. Whether or not our prayer is answered is secondary. The primary thing is that grace flows like a river from the throne and into our being.

Christians today are weak because their spiritual batteries are not charged. Because they are short of prayer, they are short of the heavenly transmission. Again and again during the day, we need to be charged with the divine electrical current. This surely is a reward for persevering in prayer.

Another benefit of praying is related to fellowship with the Lord. We all love the Lord's presence and anointing, and we all love to have fellowship with Him. But how can we enjoy the Lord's presence and have fellowship with Him? The only way is to pray. When we pray, we enter into fellowship with the Lord and become conscious of the fact that we are truly one spirit with Him and that He is actually one spirit with us. The more we pray, the more we experience being one with the Lord, and the more we enjoy His presence and have fellowship with Him. What a marvelous reward!

We have seen that for a normal Christian walk we need to set our mind on things above, have the renewing of the new man, have the peace of Christ arbitrating in us, and allow the word of Christ to inhabit us. These four matters, however, all require prayer. To practice them and to experience them we need to pray. Prayer ushers us into the reality of these four things and keeps us in this reality.

WATCHING WITH THANKSGIVING

In charging us to persevere in prayer, Paul tells us to watch in it with thanksgiving (4:2). This indicates that if we are not thankful to God for anything, we must be lacking in prayer. All day long we need to thank God. We need to be those who continually offer thanks to Him. If we are constantly giving thanks to the Lord, do you think it will be possible for a brother to argue with his wife? Surely not! Arguments between husband and wife are a sign of prayerlessness. They argue because they are lacking in prayer. The sign of a praying person is thankfulness. If you are one who perseveres in prayer, you will always be thankful to the Lord. This giving of thanks to Him will preserve you in your life of prayer.

In 4:2 Paul does not say to persevere in prayer and to watch. He says, "Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving." We watch in prayer by the giving of thanks. If we continually offer thanks to the Lord, the adversary will not be able to carry us off

from our prayer life. Prayer is maintained by watching in it with thanksgiving.

GRACE AND WISDOM

In 4:6 Paul says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." If we are praying people, we shall utter thanks to the Lord, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, our speech will be with grace. Out of our mouth will flow thanks to God and grace to others. In this way we shall know that we are praying people. However, if our speech is lacking in grace, we must be short of prayer. When we become aware of the lack of grace, we need to pray again and be charged with the divine electricity. Then our mouth will be filled with grace.

In 4:5 Paul says, "Walk in wisdom toward those who are without, redeeming the time." This is a result of persevering in prayer. If we pray without ceasing, offer thanks to God, and have speech filled with grace, we shall spontaneously become very wise and know how to redeem the time. In our daily living no time will be wasted. If we are filled with thanks to God and with grace toward others, we shall have the wisdom to walk in a way which glorifies God and builds up others. Then our time will be redeemed.

Concerning persevering in prayer, I wish to say once again that we need to be willing to make a deal with the Lord, even to make a vow to Him, that we shall be a praying people. If all the saints in all the churches make such a deal with the Lord, the recovery will be greatly enriched and uplifted. Furthermore, the saints will enjoy the Lord, His presence, and His instant and constant anointing. All day long, they will enjoy the smile of the Lord's face. As we persevere in prayer, the living Person of Christ becomes our experience and enjoyment.

Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for Spanish speaking work
- Pray for spreading to nearby cities
- Pray for the enjoyment of reading Colossians.
- For daily exercise in GOW training: prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth and attend Lord's day meeting on time.
- Pray for Russian speaking saints for their needed shepherding from past co-workers.
- For gospel preaching on West Valley College campus, as well as for English-speaking testimony in Campbell.

Announcement

- Morning Revival: Colossians chapter 4 I:1, II:2~4, III:5~6, IV:7~9, V:10~15, VI:16~18. Life Study 46~65.
- YP Bible Reading this week: Colossians chapter 4.
- YP in summer pursue program: Luke chapter 1-3.
- Prayer meeting 7:30PM at Campbell Meeting Hall.
- Chinese-Speaking Student Perfecting training:
July 29 ~ Aug 5 (Fri-Fri) in Franklin Park, NJ
Aug 4 ~ 7 (Thu-Sun) in Santa Clara, CA
Registration deadline: 7/10/2011, <http://www.mswe1.com>