

Prayer for Revival Part 4

No Revival without God Correcting us through our Prayers

“14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” (1 John 5:14-15 KJV)

Our God hear our prayers and he answers us accordingly. If we pray according to His will, we will have what we ask of Him, but if ask something out of the will of God, He will also hear it and He will deal with us by correcting us and putting us back to the path that He outlined for us.

Here we can read how Jesus responded to the prayer of the mother of Zebedees children:

“20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedees children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. 22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. 23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. 24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. 25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:20-28 KJV)

“35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. 36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? 37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. 38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? 39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: 40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. 41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. 42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. 43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: 44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. 45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:35-45 KJV)

The Word of God tells us, ***“7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” (Matthew 7:7-8 KJV)*** This mother came to ask from the Lord to do her something. Many people they ask God certain things, but good number of them do that with no deep understanding. The mother came to the Lord, worshipped Him and after her worship she prayed and gave Him her requests. Many they worship the Lord in their private life and even with others in churches, then after they will pray and ask God certain things. The Lord will hear and will act and interact accordingly with these requests. Sometime he gives, sometimes He withholds and sometimes He rebukes for the wrong requests we make. James says, ***“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” (James 4:3 KJV)*** ***Be aware that Jesus can discern your wrong motive in prayer, and he can correct you and deal with you properly.*** In this message we will see how God will do that.

The Lord when He hear our prayers will analyze the wrong motive and its source, and will deal with it. The Lord heard that mother’s request and He did not speak to her but He spoke with her two sons, James and John, ***“But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.” (Matthew 20:22 KJV)*** When we read ***‘They say unto him’***, it means Jesus spoke to them and they answered Him. The Lord knew that the prayer request of the mother is not her request but it came from her two sons. He recognized the source of the wrong prayer because He is able to see the wrong motive behind it. They were after temporal worldly Kingdom. They were after pomp and fame, after power and recognition rather than humility, perseverance and willingness to suffer for God’s Will. They were also in ignorance and blindness in vision and that also was needed to be corrected. ***In the same way we need to discern what is the wrong motive behind certain prayers and not to agree with them. God in His mercy will lead us a church to go and do that.***

In the request of the mother we can read the following: ***“Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.” (Matthew 20:21 KJV)*** Here it is mentioned, ***“in thy kingdom”*** it means Christ’s Kingdom, and that is the Kingdom of God. So the two they have faith, and that is good, that they will be with Jesus in His Kingdom. So they knew that He need to die, and He will raise up from the death for His Kingdom to come true.

Truly, Christ previous to what we read in ***Matthew 20:20-28*** had declared to His disciples what is waiting for Him in Jerusalem. ***“17 And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, 18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, 19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.” (Matthew 20:17-19 KJV)*** So here Christ told the twelve about His suffering and His self-denial that He is going to pass through. The mother of Zebedee’s children was not among the twelve when Jesus told them that. So James and John they are the one who informed their mother about it and so they are the one who told her to request him to put one of them on the right and the other on the left.

But why they did not request Him that themselves? It is a request of a wrong motive, aiming for worldly positions and putting themselves higher above the others. Sure they were afraid to do that because they will be rebuked for it.

Just imagine, Christ informed them that He will suffer, that He will be mocked, scorched and crucified, and these two immediately came to their mind to ask Him to put them in highest place, next to Him and higher than everyone. They were running fast for it before He will die, because they were afraid that they may miss such opportunity. Many people around Christ behaving like that; they are after how much they can get out of it. The two brothers were opportunistic, to get privileges and not mindful to share first in His suffering. They were so worldly, grandiose and with a wrong mind, that is why the Lord faced them immediately in order to correct them. They should seek employment in His suffering so they can be eligible to be with Him in His glory. In the same way we need to think and plan to be part of His suffering, working hard in serving Him, humbling ourselves in His hand, so that willingly we will accept what place, position and ministry He wants to put us in.

What Christ said to them about His suffering was to comfort them and to open up to them what is ahead of Him and them. But the two brothers abused Christ, and for them they need to act quickly, because if they are already in Jerusalem and his suffering started they will not be able to ask Him. They wear so selfish and egocentric. It is their pride and their contempt desire to be honored above others that made them put that prayer requests. They exposed who they are and showed the wrong things in their character and attitudes. Therefore Christ needed to correct them.

It is holiness to be better than others in seeking suffering and living in holiness, but it is worldliness to seek worldly standard of power and prestige to be above others.

We need also to accept and understand wrong motive and selfish ambition are not only sins and worldliness but it will hinder revival and affect the growth of the church in the way that God wants His church to be.

The mother was not much aware of what her two sons requested her to say in their behalf. That is why Jesus did not rebuke her but He rebuked John and James, Therefore, parents, fathers and mothers, church leaders and elders need to be careful to analyse what their youngsters, church members and co-workers are requesting them or leading them to pray or move to do.

It is their mother weakness that made her yield to their requests. It is their mother's emotion toward them what made her victim of them. But she likes it also, because they were her two sons. In the same way, we need to be aware of our emotions. We need to put them under subjection and not to allow them to take us to an embarrassing situation.

“But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask.” (Matthew 20:22 KJV) They were looking for a worldly Kingdom. They were after children fancy; they were looking for the second and third winner of the champion. They were after the privilege and not after suffering, the way to get it in accordance to God's will and way.

In the previous chapter, of Matthew 19, we read upon the departure of the rich man from Christ, the respond that Peter made toward Jesus, **“Then answered Peter and said unto him,**

Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?” (Matthew 19:27 KJV) Peter asked the Lord, **“What shall we have therefore?”** Peter was asking Christ what they are going to receive from Him upon the sacrifices that they had made, leaving behind all things in order to follow Christ?

Peter and the rest they were thinking that they have done their best and no more for them to do in God's service. That was their mind set up; they were looking for reward and what is due for them. That is why the two brothers were in hurry to ask the best places next to Christ. But it never came to their minds that suffering is still waiting ahead of them. They were not aware that they are not yet done with what God had prepared for them.

Even in this occasion, in Matthew 19, Christ also assured them that they will never fail to receive back what they had offered for the sake of Christ, as we can read what He told them, **“28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. 30 But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.”** (Matthew 19:28-30 KJV) Christ here also assured them that they will sit with him on twelve thrones to judge the tribes of Israel. Possibly that was the reason the two brothers requested to sit next to him. Some people when they hear the Word of God they will apply it in their life as a material and physical outcome without getting the spiritual essence of the lesson that God wants them to grasp. With what Jesus told them, that they will sit with him on 12 thrones, they should be grateful that they will be with Jesus. Our assurance that we will be with Jesus and forever is enough for us and no need to be ambitious about getting other things.

With the requests that the two brothers had made for Jesus, they were not able to see what the best that God had prepared for them. They desired to sit next to Him, but the Word of God tells us better hope and assurance to those who overcome trials and sufferings. The same John, the son of Zebedee lived long and he is the one who wrote the book of Revelation, and He wrote to the churches and to us today from the mouth of Jesus the following: **“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”** (Revelation 3:21 KJV) So the promise of God to those who overcome, not to sit on his right or left, but to sit with Him on His throne. So what we can conclude is that when we think in our worldly way, we will do all what we can to bypass suffering, and we will succeed in that, but we will not be able to see the blessed plan of God for us. It is true what Jesus said to them that they don't know what they are asking. Therefore we need to give more heed in the way we think and the way we pray and speak to Christ.

Think now about yourself, ‘How many time you push hard to do your own will and your own plan, but you are not aware that you had missed the good plan of God that He has for you? Therefore, repent and come back to God and you will see whether now or later on in your life the good plan that God has for you.

Notice also, we might fall into two important pitfalls.

The first one when we think that we had done much and we had suffered much to the point that we can say to the Lord as Peter said, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?” (Matthew 19:27 KJV) But the truth, we had not suffered to the point that ordained for us. We are just starting and we are just in the beginning of the narrow way.

The second pitfall is when we think that getting the right or the left seat next to Jesus is the optimum. But with that we are missing what Jesus promised to those who overcome like Him, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Revelation 3:21 KJV) Therefore never forfeit your privileges by putting aside the plan of God and get involved with your own plan and will.

Jesus here also warned them that their positions might be shuffled if they are not apt to what God expect from them, “But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.” (Matthew 19:28-30 KJV) The first can become last and vice versa. Jesus was warning them that, and what He meant is this: ‘If others are better than they, then they would be replaced.’

The two Brothers, John and James, were caught and faced by Christ; their non willingness to suffer was exposed by Christ and was put forward in front of them with this question, “**Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.**” (Matthew 20:22 KJV) They were put to shame in front of other apostles, therefore defensively answered Christ that they are able to go through it. It was really their pride to answer in this way. They were desperate not to be embarrassed by any way in front of others. Just imagine for the sake of a seat they are boasting that they are able to go through crucifixion. It is not their willingness to suffer for Christ, but for their desperation to get the seat they make such confession, when they said “**We are able.**”

With such confrontation they were rebuked by Christ. For such a spiritual sickness, they were in need for such rebuke so they will be clean and they will be purged from their pride and arrogance. Christ, would not stop here but he further stated the following to them: “**And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.**” (Matthew 20:24 KJV) Christ with this statement he reinstated the two brothers back to the plan that he had for them, to live and to suffer for Him. James was put to death by Herod, “**1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.**” (Acts 12:1-2 KJV) And John was placed in exile to the Island of Patmos where he wrote the book of Revelation, around the end of the first century. The placement of John in the Island of Patmos was around 60 years after the incident that we discussed in Matthew 20:20-28. “**I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ**” (Revelation 1:9 KJV) John here testified to the brethren that He is a companion of tribulation, patience and in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. So what we can conclude that both John and James passed into intense suffering until the Word of Jesus that He admonished them with come true in their lives. May the Word of admonishment that Jesus spoke to us, shall come true in each and every one of us lives.

Jesus passed through great suffering, “**But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.**” (Luke 12:50 KJV) Jesus was pressed to pass through that suffering. We are called also to suffer for Him, “**For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.**” (Philippians 1:29 KJV) Therefore, Let us not hide ourselves behind comforting zone and post and positions to avoid sufferings and trial and tribulation. “**Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.**” (Hebrews 13:12 KJV) Therefore, “**Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.**” (Hebrews 13:13 KJV) We need to be willing to go through suffering so we can continue to see the purpose of God in our lives.

Paul said to the Philippians, “**Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.**” (Philippians 2:17 KJV) Paul also said to the Ephesians, “**22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.**” (Acts 20:22-24 KJV)

Therefore, following the good example of Apostle Paul, we need to endeavour to go into suffering in order to help people and lead them into the whole will of God and help them to live His Word.

Revival will come into our lives and into our church, and into each and every congregation, family, worker and member when we are willing to give up our own plan and go through suffering for Christ.

My dear and beloved: “14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” (1 John 5:14-15 KJV) Our prayers and what we ask God will reveal who we are and our characters. God would correct us when He found us at wrong and drifted away. As well as we need to be instruments in God’s hand first by being good example to others in doing God’s Will, second, we need not to yield to the wrong requests and desires of those who are wishing to do what they want and not after God’s will. Therefore let us commit ourselves to what we had learned from God’s Word in this message, and be willing to suffer for Christ and to yield our service to His service so that we can experience true revival.

My prayers:

Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I thank you for your Word that shows me clearly that I should not go away from your will.

Let us confess our sins unto the Lord. Lord forgive me my sins

Lord I commit my life to follow you and walk in your ways and follow the plan that you have for me. Lord I commit myself to do your will. Lord I commit myself to go through the narrow way and be willing to suffer for you and your cause.

Lord I pray for my Brothers and Sisters who committed their lives to you, Lord protect them and provide them all their needs. Lord sustain their lives and let them be maintained till they will achieve your purpose in full in their lives.

Lord I pray for those who are willing to suffer for you, Lord use them to bring your revival into your church. Lord fills them with the Holy Spirit and give them the spiritual gifts that they need to serve you. Lord I pray that you enable them to be good example and their lives will attract others to believe in you and to follow you.

Lord I pray for us as a church to go on in serving you and do your work and your will. Lord enable us to evangelize and to reach new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and with the Word of God. Lord we pray that you will enable us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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