

Reflections on the message by Glen Rickard, 28th February 2010

“Prayer and Perspectives”

God wants you to persevere in prayer and He wants to change your perspectives through prayer. This may not be comfortable for us.

In Luke 5:16 and Luke 6:12 we can see the prayer life of Jesus. It was his habit to withdraw to pray, perhaps into the wilderness or into a mountain. It was His regular pattern. It affected His appetite, His rest and His social life. Are you prepared to let your prayer life interfere with your sleep, your food and social life? Jesus would persevere in prayer. Jesus prayed for Peter (Luke 22:31). Jesus regularly prayed for His disciples and for us! – John 17:20-24. He continues to pray for you (Hebrews 7:25). He is able to save completely and lives to make intercession for us. His prayer life continues. He doesn't grow weary praying, or get fed up of praying for you. It is a living intercession, the only living intercession. It is the best intercession for He knows what you are like. He knows us intimately. It is the most effective intercession. His is the name above all names. It is the sweetest intercession for He loves you. He calls you by name. He breathes it before His Father in heaven. But it cost Him the blood of His heart. It is the most costly intercession.

Jesus Christ asks that we imitate Him. He calls for your perseverance (2 Peter 1:5-6 NIV). It is part of the fruit of the spirit – called faithfulness in Galatians 5:22-23. We are to persevere in our prayer life as He does.

Luke 18:1 *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. (AV).*

1 Thessalonians 5:17 *Pray without ceasing. (AV)*

Search your hearts and see if you need to persevere. One way to get revelation from God is to continue to persevere in prayer and in Bible reading. We also get power and a change of perspective.

The book of Ephesians talks about power again and again. Ephesians 1:19; 3:20, 6:10. Ephesians 6:18 links power (in 6:10) to praying with perseverance (*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints*). When you do, power comes.

We need to imitate Christ's example, to persevere in prayer. Through it comes revelation, power and a change of perspective.

Glen experienced a change of perspective when he considered the story of Abijah (1 Kings 14:1-13). He was the son of King Jeroboam of Israel. God's hand was against Jeroboam because he was evil. Abijah was ill, so Jeroboam sent his wife to see the prophet for him. But the prophet said to her, when your feet enter the city, Abijah shall die, for God has found something good in him. God did not want him to suffer in the judgement on Israel. Does God do this sort of thing? Deuteronomy 32:39 tells us that He does. Our lives are in God's hands. God blessed Abijah with something greater. We find other examples in scripture. In Luke 12:16-21 the wealthy man wanted to build bigger barns for his property, but God said that He required his soul for judgement that night. In Luke 13:4-5 the disciples had told Jesus about the Tower of Siloam falling on and killing 18 people. They wanted to know if was because of sin. Jesus doesn't explain, but says that the same thing could happen to those who do not repent. Is this gentle Jesus, meek and mild?

It is a different perspective. Our society sits in judgement, enthroned about God, and puts God in the dock, saying, “Why does God allow this?” Or, “Why didn't He prevent it?” Or, “Why doesn't God change my circumstances?” We need a change of perspective. We need to be very careful and remind ourselves or who God is, and who we are. We need to humble our hearts.

God always has His eye on a much bigger picture. In Gethsemane, Jesus knew He had to go through a great time of trial. Suffering is awful. Jesus found hell rather than heaven open before Him, and staggered. He saw the wrath of God and the vileness of sin. He experienced suffering that we cannot know. God didn't want to deliver Jesus from His suffering, because that suffering was to lead to our salvation. God wants us to find Him in our suffering. Often in such times God does the most precious work in us that we otherwise would not be open to.

Circumstances are momentary and insignificant in the light of eternity. We need to look up to God and worship, for He will restore all things and be seen to be holy, good and just. Heaven is a restoration of the life you always wanted. This is the perspective change God wants you to have.

What perspective change do you need to make? Is it about your own life, or about world events. Make half an hour for prayer and Bible reading each day. There is a prayer meeting on Thursday evenings. Come and learn to pray. "Men ought always to pray" (Luke 18:1).