



Revivals And Church History :: The Majestic Promise in Matthew 18

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"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19).

The true force of the above words is, "If two of you shall symphonize" shall make one common sound. There must be no jarring note, no discordant element. We read in the first chapter of Acts 1:14 in reference to the first apostles: "They all continued in one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."

Should not we go and do likewise? Is there not a sad lack of this "one accord" "one place" principle in our midst? Supposing we find ourselves in a group where there is spiritual death and darkness. Withering formalism seems to have settled down upon the entire place. Powerless profession, dead routine, stupefying mechanical religiousness are only too evident. What is to be done? Are we to yield to the paralyzing power that blankets the group? Assuredly not!

If not, what then? Let us, even if there are only two who really feel the condition of things, let us get together with one accord and pour out our hearts to God. Let us wait on Him with united, firm purpose, until He will send a copious shower of blessing upon the barren spot. Let us not yield to that which is rightly called fatalism and say, "God is sovereign and He works according to His own will. We must wait His time. Human effort is in vain. We cannot get up a revival. We must beware of mere excitement."

Nothing can touch the truth or weaken the force of Matthew 18:19. It stands in all its blessed fullness, freeness and preciousness before the eye of faith. Its terms are clear and unmistakable. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven."

Here is our warrant for coming together to pray for anything that may be laid on our hearts. Are we mourning all the coldness, indifference and barrenness around us? Are we discouraged by the little apparent fruit of the preaching of the Gospel the lack of power in the preaching itself and the total absence of practical result? Are our souls cast down by the dullness, heaviness, barrenness and low tone of all our gatherings?

What are we to do? Fold our arms in cold indifference? Give up in despair? Shall we give vent to complaining, murmuring, fretfulness or irritation? God forbid. What then? Come together "with one accord in one place." Get down on our faces before our God and pour out our hearts, as the heart of one man pleading Matthew 18:19. This, we may rest assured, is the grand remedy and the unfailing resource.

It is perfectly true that "God is sovereign," and this is the very reason why we should wait on Him in prayer. It is perfectly true that "human effort is in vain," and that is the very reason for seeking divine power. It is perfectly true that "we cannot get up a revival." That is the very reason that through prayer we must seek to get it down. So long as Matthew 18:19 shines before our eyes so long as Christ is at the right hand of God the blessing is sure to come.

Believing

In Matthew 21:22 we find another of the essential conditions of effectual prayer: "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." What a marvelous statement! It opens the very treasury of Heaven to faith. There is absolutely no limit. Our blessed Lord assures us that we shall receive whatsoever we ask in simple faith.

The apostle James, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gives us a similar assurance in reference to the matter of asking for wisdom: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not and it shall be given him. But" here is the moral condition "let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (

1:5-7).

Ought we not to examine ourselves as to how far we really understand these two conditions of prayer: namely, unanimity and confidence? If it is true "and it must be true for Christ has said it" that two persons agreeing to ask in faith can have whatsoever they ask, why do we not see more abundant answer to our prayers? The fault must be in us "we must be deficient in concord and confidence."

Importance of Definiteness

Our Lord comes down to the very smallest congregation "even to two." But of course, the promise applies to dozens, scores or hundreds. The grand point is to be thoroughly agreed and fully persuaded that we shall receive the things for which we are asking: "And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11:9-10).

What do we learn from Luke 11? First, it teaches us to be definite in our prayers. "Friend, lend me three loaves" (v. 5). There is a positive need felt and expressed; there is one thing before the mind and on the heart. It is not a long, rambling statement about all sorts of things. It is distinct, direct and pointed "I want three loaves. I cannot do without them; I must have them; the case is urgent; the time is night. He cannot wander from the one point: "Friend, lend me three loaves."

Do we not frequently give utterances to a whole host of things of which we really do not feel the need and which we have no notion of waiting for at all? Would we not sometimes be very much taken aback were the Lord to appear to us at the close of our prayer meeting and ask: "What do you really want Me to give to you or to do for you?"

Importunity

There is another important condition set forth in our Lord's teaching in Luke 11. That is importunity. This man is not to be put off. He must get the three loaves. The man is bent upon his object "he has no alternative. In short, he will not take a refusal.

Definiteness and importunity go very much together. Where the thing sought is as definite as the three loaves, there will generally be the importune asking for it and the firm purpose to get it.

Persevering and Expecting Prayer

Another condition of prayer is found in Luke 18:1: "And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Here we have the condition of perseverance. We importunately, unitedly, believingly and perseveringly wait on our God until He graciously sends an answer, as He most assuredly will, if the moral basis and the moral conditions are duly maintained. The grand point for us is to have an object laid upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit "an object as to which we can lay the finger of faith upon some distinct promise in the Word and to persevere in prayer until we get what we want.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:18).

Beloved in the Lord, let us rouse ourselves and not be satisfied to go on with the present condition of things. The prayer meeting ought to be the place of expressed need and expected blessing. It ought to be the place of expressed weakness and expected power. It ought to be the place where God's people assemble with one accord to take hold of the very Throne of God and to get into the very treasury of Heaven "and from this treasury draw forth all that we want for ourselves, for our households, for the whole Church of God and for the vineyard of Christ!

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