

Patience Must Be Coupled With Faith

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the necessity of persistent faith and prayer in reclaiming spiritual territory from the enemy.

Duration: 56:52

Scripture: Luke 18:1

Topics: "Persistent Prayer", "Faith And Trust"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of persistent prayer and faith in God's promises. Drawing from biblical examples like the widow who kept going to the judge, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Hannah, the message encourages believers to pray fervently and patiently, trusting that God hears and answers prayers. It also highlights the need for unwavering faith in God's goodness and provision, even in the face of trials and persecution.

Transcript

In relation to the last days, Jesus said these words in Matthew chapter 18, sorry, Luke chapter 18. He told a parable about a widow who kept going to a judge until she got what she wanted, which was protection from her enemy. That's what she was asking for.

She said her rights were being violated. She said, give me protection, verse 3, from my enemy. There was an enemy who was harassing her, maybe encroaching on her property and taking what belonged to her, knowing that she was a helpless widow.

Very interesting to see how in the Bible, Jesus always pictures the church as something helpless and weak, a widow or a lamb in the midst of wolves, a poor widow in the midst of enemies. That's so true to what we have seen the true church to be in 2,000 years. The church was never meant to be mighty and strong and powerful and influential as far as the world is concerned, but humanly speaking, weak.

In 1 Corinthians 1, he says, look among your own midst, Paul says. There are not many mighty, not many clever, not many rich. God has chosen those who are weak and foolish so that people will depend on him.

That's why he makes us weak. So this widow kept going to the judge, and finally she got what she wanted. And the Lord said, don't you think God will, verse 7, bring justice for his elect who cry to him day and night, and will he delay long over them? He was saying if a heathen judge could answer this widow because she

was persistent, don't you think a loving God, who is your father, will bring justice for his elect if, like the widow, they cry day and night to him asking for protection against their enemy, in our case, Satan.

Lord, Satan is taking over certain areas of my life. I want them back from the devil. He's controlling my eyes, he's controlling my tongue, he's controlling my thoughts, he's occupied certain areas of property that belong to you.

I want protection from him. I want it back. Many of us have prayed a few times here and there.

That would be like the widow going to the judge once every six months to say, will you do something for me, and nothing happens. See, that's the way a lot of Christians pray for overcoming sin or for the power of the Holy Spirit. Once in a while, and they get sort of reminded, they're not serious.

I mean, if somebody were constantly taking more and more of your property, your neighbor, for example, is moving the compound wall more and more and more and taking over your house, how long would you sit and watch it? That's the point here. Then he says these words finally, I tell you, God will bring justice for them quickly, verse 8, but when the Son of Man comes, this is speaking about the last days, when he comes back to earth, will he find faith on this? Will he find that kind of persistent faith on the earth? In other words, the Lord says, in how many people am I going to find that persistent faith that believes that God is a good God, and he's a loving Father? He will not withhold any good thing from those who ask him. You know, just the things that Jesus spoke about.

If he asks for bread, he will not give us a stone. He asks him for an egg, he will not give us a scorpion. He asks him for a fish, he will not give us a snake.

He will give us what we want, but we have to keep on asking for it. There were only two parables that Jesus ever spoke on prayer. He spoke on many other subjects in the parables, but on prayer he spoke only two parables.

One was this one, where the widow kept on going to the judge and saying, help me, help and got what she wanted. And the other was in Luke chapter 11 about the man who went to his neighbor asking for bread for a visitor who had come to his house, give me bread, give me bread, kept on knocking them at midnight, woke him up and got the bread. Those are the only two parables that Jesus taught on prayer, and in both cases the main emphasis is persistence.

And he linked it with faith. Now, we hear a lot about faith in Christendom today, but unfortunately the devil has sidetracked Christians to make them think of faith only in relation to material things or some earthly blessing, whereas Jesus taught that we don't seek for the earthly blessing, we seek for the heavenly, and the earthly gets thrown in. And that's what he taught us, in the Old Testament they sought for the earthly, and they got only the earthly, they got nothing heavenly, not even Abraham.

But in the New Testament Jesus said, don't seek the earthly, but seek the heavenly and I'll throw in the earthly as a bonus. Seek the kingdom of God, first is righteousness, and all these other things, food, clothing, shelter will be added to you, whatever you need. So, unfortunately the focus has been shifted by the devil onto the earthly, which is because people live under the Old Covenant, they're occupied with the earthly, their promises are all in the Old Testament.

And so, the result is, the enemy is quite happy, because the enemy has occupied whole areas of the lives of these people who are claiming earthly blessings from God. They're getting houses, and lands, and cars,

and so many things, but the enemy has occupied their bodies. The enemy controls their thoughts, the enemy controls their married life, divorce, and remarriage, and all that goes on, but they're all the time claiming earthly blessings.

What a work the devil has done. And where are the elect who say, Lord, don't let the enemy take property that belongs to you. Give me justice against my enemy.

Will the Lord Jesus find such faith when he comes again? Will he find people who don't give up until they have taken back all the property the enemy took? You know, we had a war with Pakistan some time ago, because very sneakily they took some part of Indian territory in an area called Kargil, some years ago, in the mountains of the Himalayas near Kashmir. And what did the Indian government do about it? Well, it is a mountainous area, there's nobody living there, but they didn't sit back and say, oh, that's okay, it's not such an important area, we'll let them have it. No.

Because of one reason. They knew if they let them have that, tomorrow they'll take something else. So they fought, many people laid down their lives, and they got it back.

Imagine if Christians were like that, and say, boy, that one area of my life, the devil seems to be ruling there. He just seems to rule my temper, or he rules some other area, and I'm not going to let him have it, I'm going to get it back. And I'm not going to give up, I'm going to be like that widow, who's going to keep going and keep going and keep going and say, God, I know you want me to control my temper, I know you want me to control my eyes, I know you want every part of my body to belong to you.

I know the devil's got to have, this whole body's been purchased by the blood of Christ, and the devil's got no right to touch any part of it. I believe that. I believe the devil's got no right to touch any part of my body, or my soul, my mind, or my emotions, he's got no right to make me depressed.

No, God doesn't give depression, the fruit of the spirit is not depression, it's joy. But the devil fools me, fools Christians, and says, oh well, you will get depressed now and then. And once you believe that lie of the devil, you'll allow the enemy to occupy some territory of yours, and let him keep it sometimes, or occasionally occupy it now and then.

We've got to understand that Jesus Christ, when he died on the cross, purchased us completely. Our body, our mind, our emotions, our spirit were purchased by the blood of Christ. The only thing, he doesn't force us to give ourselves to him, he wants us to recognize that we are his, and say, Lord, you purchased me with your blood.

And that's worth more than millions and millions and millions and millions of dollars. Imagine if you had something in your house, which you purchased with millions and millions and millions and millions of rupees, how carefully you would keep it. You wouldn't allow anybody to take that away.

And here's something purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. Every part of us. The Bible says, you have been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body.

I'm supposed to glorify God with my tongue, I'm supposed to glorify God with my eyes, with my mind, my emotions. I'm not supposed to allow the devil to get any part of this. Every bit of it was purchased by Christ.

He's the rightful owner. I must not allow the devil to come and occupy one room in my body, one room in my mind. And if he has occupied, and he has occupied, in the case of many, many believers, he's occupied many, many rooms in their lives.

And the sad thing is, unlike this widow, they sit back and say, well, at least I've got one or two rooms for myself. The devil's occupied a hundred rooms. The widow wouldn't sit back quietly.

She went to the judge, she said, give me justice, give me justice, drive this enemy out. He's too strong for me, I can't drive him out myself. You've got to help me to drive him out.

And Jesus said, that's how we've got to go to God and ask him. And at the end of it, he says, when the Son of Man comes, will he find people like this, who got this type of faith, who will believe that the devil's got no right to have any part of their body, any part of their mind, any part of their emotions, will he find people like that? I'll tell you this, I've traveled many, many countries, there are very, very few people that Jesus finds like this, who recognize the devil's got no right to any part of me. You've got to recognize that first.

You're not asking God for a favor. I mean, if somebody has stolen something that belongs to you, you're not asking for a favor to get it back. It's yours.

Jesus purchased it, it's yours, it belongs to God. The devil's got no right to take it. The same thing applies to our body.

I have personally, at least for myself, I believe that God's will for me is physical health. Why do I say that? Because he's a loving father. A loving father never wishes anything bad for his children.

The Bible says, every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the father of lights with whom there is no shadow caused by turning. See that verse in James chapter 1. It's a very lovely verse to know how good our heavenly father is. Every good thing given, James 1 verse 17, every perfect gift comes from above, from the father of lights.

And there's nothing two-faced about God. No, there's no variation by shifting shadows. It's a light that shines so brightly that there are no shadows.

Every good and perfect gift comes from above. And I want to tell you, anything in your life which is not good and perfect did not come from above. It came from the devil.

I recognized that a long time ago. Anything in my life which is not good and perfect did not come from above. That came from the devil.

The devil got a hold of me somewhere and I'm determined to drive him out. We must take that position. We must be very strong in that position.

I'm determined to drive the devil out of every area of my life where he has occupied that which doesn't belong to him. I have to go to God and say, give me justice against my enemy. If he's occupied some area of your home, if he's taken possession of one of your children, or messed up your business or your finances.

I don't love money, but I don't believe that money is given to me by the devil and God blesses my work and I don't believe the devil should interfere in it. He's got no right to do anything there. He's got no right in

any area of my life.

I've finished with him. There was a time when I served him, but that's long, long ago. He's got no right over any of your lives, my brothers and sisters.

If you are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, the devil has got no right over any area of your life or your family or your business or your finances. God's blessing is supposed to be upon your life, upon your body, upon your children, upon your business, upon your finances, upon everything, every part of your life. And if one area is taken by the devil, you've got to get it back.

Don't sit back and say, oh, well, that's a small area in some mountain called Kargil. It doesn't matter if it's taken. It does matter because if you let that go, something more will go.

And that's why the Indian government went and fought and took it back. And then the enemy realized, we better not try tricks with this country. And that's what the devil needs to recognize.

He needs to recognize that you will not allow him to take even a small bit of your life or your home or your business or anything. It's entirely God's. So does that mean that God will never allow us to be sick? I believe that in the Bible teaches in the book of Second Corinthians 12, Paul got a thorn in the flesh, but that thorn in the flesh was something that God allowed.

It was from the devil. And Paul did what the widow did. Lord, I want to get this out of my system, get this thorn out of my flesh, get this thorn out of my flesh.

And the Lord said, no, I'm going to use this to give you something more than you would have got without it. You are in danger of becoming proud, Paul. I will humble you through this and God gives his grace to the humble.

So you're going to get more grace. So what the devil did is going to result in protecting you from becoming proud and giving you more grace. In other words, he got something better through being sick than through being healthy.

So that's the position I've taken for many, many years. I say, Lord, you got to either heal me or give me something better than healing. But I will not accept anything less than that.

That's the position all of us must take in relation to anything, in relation to anything that happens, say some evil that somebody does to us. Well, we have to pray according to Romans 8, 28, that God has to make that evil work for my good. I'm not going to let that evil happen without something good coming out of it in my life.

I'm not going to sit back and say, oh, well, I'll just forgive him for that evil. That's good. I'll forgive him.

But that's not enough for me. I've got to convert. God has to convert that evil into something so good that I would not have had if that fellow hadn't done that evil to me.

That's faith, to believe that God will turn the tables on the devil or he will get rid of it altogether. So it's one of two things as far as I'm concerned. If any area of the devil touches me, my body or my family or my business or anything, I say, Lord, you either got to drive them out completely out of this area or turn this into something so fantastically good for me that the devil will see what a fool he's made of himself by troubling me in that way.

See, we troubled Paul and something good came to Paul. We must take that position. We must remember that God is always on our side against the devil.

You don't have to convince him, God, please be on my side against the devil. Please be on my side. What do you mean? I never pray like that.

He's already on your side against the devil. It's an insult to go to God and say, Oh God, please be on my side against the devil. The reason why very often we don't experience all that God wants us to experience is because we haven't given ourselves totally to him.

The areas in our life we want to keep for ourselves. There are ambitions that we have in our life which are our own. But then, of course, God can't do anything there because God will not enter into areas of our life where we don't allow him to enter.

I'll tell you this. If there's anybody sitting here who surrendered your total life, all your future ambitions, plans, your body, head to foot and everything that you are and that you have and say, Lord, I'm totally yours. I only want to do your will.

You can be pretty sure that God will not allow the devil to get any advantage in your life. Every single thing will work for your good. But you've got to be persistent in prayer.

You've got to go to God and say, God, I'm not going to let you go till you answer this. I mean, when Paul had this thorn in the flesh, do you know how long he prayed? People will say he prayed three times. Well, that's what the Bible says.

But that's not really the answer. He prayed until he got an answer from God. It happened to be three times.

If he hadn't got an answer the third time, you think he'd have stopped? He'd have prayed a fourth time. And if he hadn't got an answer from God the fourth time, he'd have prayed a fifth time. He'd have prayed a 30th time or a 300th time until he got an answer from God.

Either the removal of the thorn in the flesh or like God said, I'll give you grace, which is even better than health. So, our position is one of victory. That's why Paul could say even in a prison, I rejoice.

If the devil gets Paul locked up in prison, well, that's fine. I mean, he prays, Lord, deliver me from prison. None of us like to be in prison.

But as long as he's in prison, well, some of the jailers will get converted. There'll be time to sit down and write the episodes, which he doesn't get time outside. Something good is going to come out of even that.

The devil's going to be made a fool of. Lord, give me justice against my enemy. It's in this connection that the Lord said, when I come, will I find people with this faith who believe that whatever the devil does to them, I will either deliver them completely from that or make it work for my good.

There's a lovely verse in Psalm 76. Psalm 76, it says, and verse 10, the wrath of man will praise you, O Lord. That means man's anger.

God can turn it around to make it fulfill his purpose in prison. And the rest of man's wrath, he will restrain. It says he will gird himself with it.

Man's anger. Maybe people are angry with you because you're living for God. Maybe people in your office don't like you because you're an out-and-out witness for Christ.

I know I have many enemies I have had in my workplace, and my relatives, and Christendom, because I say, I'm not going to compromise. I'm going to stand for the truth. And some of them are angry in so many ways.

But the anger of man has always resulted in the glory of God, because I believe God's word. I have faith that the devil will not be able to get an advantage in my life. He may trouble me.

He may harass me. He even crucified Jesus Christ. But what is the result of his crucifying Jesus Christ? Salvation for the whole world.

What a wonderful thing. The worst thing the devil did, crucifying the Son of God, turned out to be the best thing for the human race. And that is God's demonstration to us that the worst thing that the devil does can only result in good.

Will the Son of Man find that type of faith on earth? To believe that God is always on my side against the devil. So when we see some particular situation, we mustn't just sit back and say, oh well, I'll just accept that. You're not supposed to accept it if it's dishonoring to God.

No, you must resist it. When you see a mountain in your way, what are you supposed to do? Oh well, what to do now? No, Jesus said speak to the mountain and tell it to get out of the way, because you want to go through. That's what he told us to do.

You see a mountain in the way, tell it to get out of the way. Hindrances that the devil puts in our path are not signals saying, oh, you better retreat now. No, but they are a challenge to my faith.

When the Israelites came to the Red Sea in front of them, what did that indicate? Was the Red Sea an indication that, oh, you better turn back to Egypt now. God's trying to stop you. God was not trying to stop them.

The Red Sea was not a signal to retreat and go back to Egypt. It was a challenge to their faith. Can God take me through the sea? Yes, he can.

And they went through. And then they came to the River Jordan. How to go across the River Jordan, 600,000 people.

That's not a signal to go back to the wilderness. No, split the river, Lord, and take us through. And they went through.

This is what the Bible teaches us. That we're not to sit back and accept conditions as they are. Let me give you an example from the Old Testament.

Before I get there, let me read you a verse in Hebrews chapter 6. In Hebrews 6, it speaks about Abraham. And it says about Abraham that when God made a promise to Abraham, verse 13. And he said, I'll surely bless you and I'll surely multiply you.

And he said that to him when he was 75 years old. And the first son he got through which this multiplication of seed could begin was when he was 100 years old. 25 years after God gave him a

promise, he got it.

And those 25 years, he just waited. He's called the father of faith, but it says here. And so Hebrews 6, 15, having patiently waited for 25 years, he obtained the promise.

See, we live in an age where we want everything done quickly. You know, we have instant coffee, instant tea. Press a button and you get this and you press a button and you get that.

And somehow, particularly those of us who live in the cities, it gets into our system. We get impatient when there's a delay on the roads. If there's a traffic jam and we are delayed by five minutes, we have to stand in the traffic for five minutes.

That looks like five hours. We're impatient. We want to get it immediately.

We want to get somewhere immediately. We want to get something done immediately. And somehow that gets into our Christian life also.

We say, Lord, give me the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I expect it in the next two minutes. Give me holiness.

I expect it in the next two minutes. Instant holiness. Give me victory over sin.

Give me this. Give me that. Overnight, I must get it.

Abraham waited 25 years. It was faith with patience. And unfortunately, the emphasis in Christendom today is just faith.

What about when Jesus spoke about faith in relation to that widow? What did that widow have? Patience or persistence. Perseverance. He was persistent.

She was persistent, persevering. And that's how she got what she asked for. The same thing with Abraham.

God made a promise to him and he kept him waiting 25 years. And he got it after 25 years. And we see here in verse 12.

So that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Faith and patience. You can't inherit the promises with just faith.

It's faith plus patience. And very often, the reason we have not inherited the promises is because we've just got faith. And we don't get it.

Here it says, if you want to inherit God's promises, you must have faith plus patience. And that patience is manifested in keeping on asking. Maybe for some years for something or at least some days.

And why do we keep on asking? Because we know we are asking according to God's will. There are certain things we definitely know are God's will. Everything that is good is God's will.

Because he's a loving father. He gives good gifts to those who ask him. And if I can, God's given me common sense to know what is good.

Jesus gave me examples like, don't you know what's good for your children? If they ask you for bread, will you give a stone? If they ask you for fish, will you give a serpent? No. Well, those are the examples he gave me and that's enough for me. I know what's good.

The example he gives me is, what will you give your children as a father? I am a father and I know what I'll give my children. But that's exactly what God wants to give you. What's good for you.

I say, Lord, I believe that. I want to believe that you will give me what is good for me. And not something which is bad for me.

Never. Because I never give anything bad to my children. I always give that what is good.

How much more my heavenly father. Much more than me. And so, when I ask for something which I believe is good for me, I keep on asking and I say, Lord, I'll get it.

I don't know when you're going to give it to me, but I believe I'm going to get it. I remember when I sought God for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I went here and there and I didn't get it.

And I said, Lord, I don't want a counterfeit. I don't want somebody to just give me some cheap experience and fool me that I got it. I want the real thing.

And if it takes me 10 years, I'm going to wait 10 years, but I'll get the real thing. There are other things like that I prayed for. I remember when I had to leave the Navy and they wouldn't let me go.

And I kept asking. And I said, Lord, I'll wait on you. I'll trust you, trust you, trust you.

Finally, they let me go. So, there are things in life that you may not get if you don't persist. It is God's will for you.

You ask for it once in a while. You'll miss it. If it's good for you, God wants you to have it.

He's your loving father. Don't you think God wants you to have a pure thought life? I'll tell you that's much more important than physical health. Much, much more important.

We'll discover it when we get to heaven. It is God's will. Say, Lord, I want it.

I'm going to ask you for it and I'll never leave you till I get it. Think of you young people decided to seek God for that with all your heart. Like the widow and say, I'm not going to let the devil get a hold of this part of my life.

No. I don't care how long it takes. I'm going to get this property back for God.

It belongs to God. So, when you turn to the Old Testament, in the book of Genesis, there was something significant I was seeing. Who are some of the great people in the Old Testament from Abraham onwards? Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

The, among the descendants of Abraham through whom God began a new thing, the nation of Israel, the most important people mentioned in the book of Genesis are Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. And I noticed something about all of them. Something similar about all three.

I don't know whether you noticed it. All three of them, their mothers were barren for many, many, many years. Isaac was born when his mother was 90 years old.

After his father and mother had been married for probably 40, 50 years. And 25 years after God called Abraham and said, I'm going to give you a son. I'm going to bless the world through you.

He never got it. But they prayed, they trusted, they prayed, they trusted, they prayed, they trusted. 25 years later, they got it.

Think if they had given up. With faith and patience, they inherited the promises. Now, Isaac.

Now, about Abraham, we know that. Now, if you go to Genesis chapter 25, we read here in verse 20. Genesis 25, verse 20.

Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebecca to be his wife. He was 40 years old. And Isaac prayed hard to God for his wife because she was barren.

Imagine God choosing a woman to be the wife of his precious servant, Abraham's son, Isaac. And then allowing her to be barren. And a lot of heathen women around who were very fertile and having many children.

But this woman was barren. And she was sovereignly chosen by God. God sent, Abraham sent his servant and prayed for him.

And the servant prayed to God, Lord, lead me to the right woman. And he finds Rebecca. And she comes along with and gets married to Isaac.

And lo and behold, she's barren. Now, a lot of people would sit back and say, oh, well, I suppose that's God's will. But not Isaac.

He had experienced, he heard from his father and mother how they got him. And he said, well, I'm not going to give up if my dad and mom could. I'm only 40.

My dad was 90. And he didn't give up. So I'm not going to give up.

And he kept on praying and praying and praying. How long do you think he prayed? Do you know? If you've heard me before, you know. Otherwise, I doubt whether you know.

It says here that in verse 26, the last part, Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born. How long did he pray? 20 years. Imagine if you have a wife who is barren.

And you pray and you pray and you pray. Most people would probably give up after two or three years. Not Isaac.

He said, God, I believe you're going to give me a child. I don't care what the doctors say. I don't care what anybody says.

You are a good God. Every good and perfect gift comes from you. I'm going to seek you and seek you and seek you.

And after 19 years, one day, Rebecca says, hey, at last. I'm pregnant. Can you imagine the excitement that Isaac had? God answered prayer with faith and patience.

They inherited the promises. There wouldn't have been any Jacob or nation of Israel if this guy hadn't prayed. A lot of us, we think, well, whatever is God's will will happen.

You know, that's not Christianity. That's Hinduism. That's a fatalistic attitude.

Whatever is God's will, it will happen. Well, I'll tell you a lot of things in my life didn't happen automatically because I said, Lord, I'm going to get it. I'm not going to give up.

I'm going to get it. And you're going to give it to me. Otherwise, something else would have happened, which is not God's will.

And I believe a lot of other things have happened in your life, which are not God's will, because you sit back with this fatalistic attitude and say, whatever will be will be. Imagine if Isaac had said that. Oh, well, whatever will be will be.

I suppose we'll just Isaac and told Rebecca, let's just love one another and be a good testimony. No, we're going to pray that God will give us a child and let people love. 10, 15 years, no answer.

Never mind, I'm going to pray. I thank God for the example of these men. And then Jacob got married.

And, you know, he wanted to marry Rachel. And his father-in-law cheated him and gave him Leah, the older girl. And then he married her.

And then he married Leah's servant and Rachel's servant. And finally, he got 10 sons and one daughter. And none of them through his favorite wife, Rachel, she was barren.

She was barren. And it says here, Rachel became so desperate in Genesis chapter 30. When Genesis chapter 30, verse 1, when Rachel realized she wasn't going to have any children for Jacob, she became jealous and she told Jacob, give me sons or I'll die.

Boy, what a way to pray. Lord, you got to do this for me. And finally, it says in verse 22, I don't know how many years, but 11 children were born to Jacob before Rachel got a child.

10 sons and one daughter. And then verse 22, God remembered Rachel and God listened to her. That's the word I want you to notice.

God listened to her means she was persistently praying and opened her womb. And she got a son named Joseph. And boy, what a ministry that man, Joseph, God had planned through Joseph.

All of Israel's future was dependent on this little boy. By the time he was 30 years old, things had to change. This boy was destined for something great.

And he was born through prayer. These great men in the book of Genesis, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph were all born to mothers who were barren for many, many, many years. But through faith and patience, they asked God and they got something.

These things are written for our instruction. Not just in the matter of having children. To have children is not the greatest thing in the world today, but to fulfill the will of God.

And also earthly things. Jesus taught us to pray for our daily bread as well. We can ask for daily bread.

We can ask for physical health. We can ask for children. We can ask for a house.

We can ask for a job. We can ask for a wife. We can ask for a husband.

God's concerned about everything. And above all, we can ask for an overcoming life and God will make us a blessing to others. You know, I've been preaching for 45 years at least.

And even today, there's hardly a meeting where I don't pray to God and say, God, give me a prophetic word. Give me, Lord. Give me.

I believe you want to bless your people. If I got up here and said, well, I'm not so sure. Whether God wants to bless his people today.

I'd waste everybody's time. I'm not standing up here to find out whether I'm capable or I've got a word in my mind. No, I want to know one thing.

Does God want to bless his people today? And I say, yes, I believe that. Does he want to bless the people through me? Yes, because I happen to be standing here. If you're standing here, then God wants to bless the people through you.

But if you don't believe that, oh, you see, I'm just nobody. I don't know whether God will ever bless through me. I assure you, God will never bless anybody through you.

Because that's your attitude. No, I'm not here to desire something God doesn't want me to have. But if God puts me up there somewhere to do something, I believe God's going to make me a blessing to other people.

I'm not supposed to be a curse to other people. I'm supposed to be a blessing wherever I go. And so are you.

The blessing of Abraham. I will bless you and you'll be a blessing. Lord, that is your will for my life.

And I'm going to do it. I took that promise many years ago. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you, is what God told Abraham.

And Galatians 3.14 says, this blessing is for us through the Holy Spirit. Yep, it's for you. But it will not be yours if you don't claim it.

It's like somebody sent you a check and you kept it safely inside your cupboard. You don't get one paisa from that. You got to go and cash it.

You got to claim it. You say, Lord, I believe the devil's got no place in any part of my house. Absolutely not.

I believe God wants us to be able to sleep well. You know, sometimes when we go down to these villages in Tamil Nadu for conferences, in order not to burden them, my wife and I, we rent a, take a room in a hotel over there and stay there. And I'll tell you something I've discovered through many years of staying in these hotel rooms.

These hotel rooms are infested by demons. Because all types of evil are done in these hotel rooms. I don't know what all evil, but I can sense when I go to these rooms that there is an evil influence, that number of people who stayed in this room, I don't know what all they did, but there's evil here.

And if I forget to resist the devil and cleanse that room before going to sleep, then I sense it when I'm asleep. Then I got to wake up and rebuke the devil and cleanse the room and then my sleep is peaceful. This has happened so many times, numerous times.

I don't believe I'm supposed to have a disturbed sleep. No, God doesn't give his children disturbed sleep. That's the devil.

If you think God gives that to you, then you'll have it. I don't believe God gives. Do I go and disturb my children when they're sleeping every two hours or so? I'm a bad father compared to God.

I'm just giving you an example. God is a good God. Let's believe that.

He's on our side against the devil. There's absolutely nothing evil he desires for his children. Everything good.

We must believe that. And like these men, persistently they prayed. You take another example, another great man of God in the Bible was saved.

You know how he was born? Because his mother never stopped praying. Imagine if Hannah in 1 Samuel chapter 1, well, she'd given up. Because, well, we might be married to my husband for so long.

He's got another wife and he's got children through. And it says in 1 Samuel 1 6, the other wife, you know, this man Elkanah had two wives. And the other wife had children, had sons and daughters.

You read in verse 4. And she used to irritate this other wife. Because, hey, you don't have any children. You don't have any children.

You know how people try to look down on you because you don't have what they have. Yeah, that's sad thing. I hope you never do that to anybody.

Look down on somebody because you have something he doesn't have. Hear me, that's, you've got something of the devil in you if you're like that. So this other woman, she had something of the devil, Penina, that was her name.

She used to harass and harass Hannah like anything. Look down on her, make fun of her. Because she had something that they, which Hannah didn't have.

It's very easy. I'll tell you this. Don't think that you don't have it.

It's quite possible that you look down on somebody who doesn't have some area where you have something which they don't have. And you can look down on them, then you're in the category of Penina. And God hates you.

Sure. And this poor Hannah was derided and mocked. Who were Penina's sons and daughters? I don't even know their names.

But I know who Hannah's son was, Samuel. I tell you, you may be despised by others and rejected. But if you see God like Hannah and say, Lord, give me one son.

I'll bring him up for you, she said. And she prayed and prayed every year. She would go to the temple at the feast time and pray, Oh God, please remember me, remember.

I don't know how many years she went. But one day God heard her prayer. And we read in verse 20.

Verse, the Lord remembered Hannah. And Hannah conceived when Samuel gave birth to a son. And she kept her promise and gave that boy back to the Lord.

And he grew up to be one of the greatest prophets of Israel who turned the course of Israel's history. It came through a woman's prayer. This was the prophet who anointed David.

It's a woman's prayer. Very often behind a great man of God, you'll see some woman who's been praying. You don't see her.

A lot of people don't even know the name Hannah. They all know Samuel. But when Samuel gets his reward in the final day, you don't think God's going to call Hannah and say, Hey, come up here, Hannah.

You got a portion of this reward too. Behind many, many great men of God, there's some woman who's praying. And I want to say, because Hannah didn't give up, she persisted like that widow.

Not just faith, faith plus patience. It wasn't this occasional prayer. It was a burden, fervent, never give up type of prayer.

It doesn't take, it doesn't matter how many years I don't get an answer. These are the examples in the New Testament. Jesus said in Luke's gospel chapter 21, in the last days, he said, nation, verse 10, nation will fight against nation.

Huge earthquakes will occur in various places. There'll be famines. Sometimes you think even the sky is falling down.

But verse 12, Luke 21, before any of this happens, they will arrest you. He's talking about Christians. What happened to God? Can't he protect Christians from being arrested? No, he allows them to be arrested, hunted down, dragged to court.

Can't God stop his servants from being dragged to court? No, he allows them to be dragged to court and into jail. False accusations. It happened to Paul.

It happened to Peter. It'll go from bad to worse. It'll be dog-eat-dog, everyone at your throat, because you carry the name of Jesus.

And you'll end up in the witness stand, called to testify, make up your mind right now, not to worry about it. I'll give you such words and wisdom that'll reduce all your accusers to stammers and stutters. I believe that.

He'll do that. You'll even be turned in by your parents and relatives and brothers and friends. They'll turn you in.

Some of you will be killed. Couldn't God stop them? No, he'll allow them to be killed. Even so, remember this.

There's no telling who will hate you because you belong to me. But remember this, every detail of your body and soul, even the hairs on your head are under my care. Nothing will be lost.

Nothing will be touched without my permission. By your patience, you will save your souls. That's the time when we need to be patient and say, Lord, I can't understand why you allow this persecution.

But I believe you're on the throne. I tell you, we need it in the coming days. God is on the throne no matter what happens.

The devil was defeated on the cross 2,000 years ago, no matter what happens. Every hair on my head is numbered. Every nose, every detail of what's happening to me.

And I'm willing to be patient, trusting, faith plus patience. And so, brothers and sisters, in the little trials that come your way, be patient. Say, Lord, help me to endure through this without complaining, believing with all my heart that you're on my side.

And you're going to give me every good and perfect gift. And if you want something, ask God for it. And say, Lord, I'm not going to give up till you give this to me.

I have these wonderful examples in the New Testament of people who asked and asked and asked and asked. And they got it. Delight yourself in the Lord and he'll give you the desires of your heart.

Let's pray. Let's bow our heads before God. And let's do a little homework as our heads are bowed.

Do you have a need in your life? Could be spiritual, could be emotional, could be mental, could be material, could be physical. Will you say, Lord, you're my father. You care for me more than any earthly father and mother care for their child.

I want you to give me this thing. Don't be ashamed. Don't be ashamed to ask for... God's not interested only in spiritual things.

He made you spirit, soul, and body. Ask Him. Say, Father, I want this.

I want you to do it for me and I'm not going to give up because I believe this is a good thing I'm asking for. I'm not going to give up till you answer my prayer. Because I pray in the name of Jesus who purchased me with His blood, who died for me, who loves me still, who's praying for me right now.

It's your right hand. Thank you, Father. I'm not going to give up.

I believe you'll give me what I ask for. I trust you. Thank you, Father.

We thank you, Father, for your love and care for us which is way beyond what we can imagine. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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