



Desperate prayers

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission (Hebrews 5:7). Think about it: the Son of God calling out in His distress to His Father.

Here we have an example of desperate prayer. Also, consider that Jesus' desperate prayer here goes hand in hand with obedience to the Father. O, how desperate are we sometimes for the help of God! Still, are we so desperate that we are even willing to obey God if His answers to our prayers are different from what we expect?

Obedience

From Moses we learn how he prayed for the nation: *"But now, please forgive their sin – but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written"* (Exodus 32:32). Think about what this really means. Here is someone who is willing to go to hell for the sake of his nation.

Hundreds of years later, Paul prayed nearly the same prayer: *"I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race"* (Romans 9:2-3). What an example of the heart of an intercessor! That which neither Moses nor Paul could do – to carry the curse of God for the nation on their behalf – Christ came to carry. Moses and Paul had the same attitude as Christ in prayer. If we want to pray for the world and its needs, we will need the same attitude, the same desperation, the same heart, the same tears as Jesus (Hebrews 5:7), the same birth pains and day-and-night prayer as Paul (Galatians 4:19), the same attitude as Moses who was, for 40 days and 40 nights, without food or water before the face of God, in prayer for the anger of God to subside against the Israelites.

No other options

Look at the amazing lessons we learn from Luke 18:1-8: *Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting*

them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Jesus told them a parable to explain that one should always pray without losing hope. In a certain city, there was a judge who had no respect for God or a person. In the same city, there was a widow who continuously came to ask that he would do right towards her concerning a case against an adversary. For some time, he did not want to help her, but later he said to himself: *"For God, I do not have respect, and I consider no man, but as this widow keeps harassing me, I will help her in her plea; otherwise she will eventually wear me out."* Then the amazing part: the Lord says, *"Listen to what the unjust judge says. Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"*

Look at the total helplessness of this woman. Look at her desperate situation. Specifically look at her conduct. It compares with Jesus' persevering, desperate prayer. And He makes it clear that when we pray like this, there will be a breakthrough. Day-and-night prayer, perseverance in prayer, desperate prayers and prayers prayed in faith, bring God's answer.

Desperate prayer is not prayer prayed with other options available. It is prayer when there is no other option than to call on God and God alone. It is not the part of prayer that is a "good chat" with God. It is not about just speaking to God. In this instance, it is prayer that calls, cries out to God. It is to beg God. Charles Spurgeon writes: "The best form of prayer is prayer that comes as a cry to God."

It is not prayer that comes from the plan or works of man. It is prayer that comes from the heart and is not usually by rational choice. It is prayer that has no recipe, no method or strategy. It is not someone else's prayer I take to read or pray. It is prayer without pretence. It is not to pray beautifully to impress people. It is prayer where people rend their hearts and not only their clothes. It is prayer that seeks the attention of God. It is prayer that does not care what people say or think.

There is an urgency, an intensity – there is no time for anything else. It is like a woman during childbirth; there is nothing else she is thinking about than the child that has to be born. Nothing else matters except the pain and that the child must be born. This is prayer that is giving birth, prayer that gives spiritual birth, bringing forth new life.

Purpose-driven focused prayer

It is like a magnifying glass that focuses all the energy of the sun in one place to produce a flame. It is not 5-minute-a-day prayers taking place when I have time, because there are too many other priorities. It is prayer where I lose my dignity on the grounds of the desperateness of my heart.

There are tears, fasting and prayer, unspeakable supplication. It is not prayer that can be learned. It is prayer birthed out of crisis and desperation. It is prayer that needs an answer.

It is prayer that understands the heart of God, allowing God the Holy Spirit to impregnate your spirit with prayer burdens from His heart. It is more often prayer burdens that do not relate to your own needs, but to the needs of the world and the will of God.

Desperate prayer does not understand "selfishness." There is no consciousness of people. It is a fight for life and death. It is prayer where I hide nothing from God – no sin, no secrets and not even my weakness. No merits of my own holiness, goodness or sincerity are viable before the throne of God. No nice words or formulated sentences qualify. It is like someone drowning, gasping for air. It is to grasp at God with hope – based on His character, His promises, the blood, the cross, His covenant, His invitation, His throne of grace.

No price is too high

We need to understand that no price we pay will convince God, for the price has already been paid and that price was Christ. Desperate prayer is prayer from our human weakness to lay hold of Jesus in His might as our heavenly Intercessor. It is prayer that understands that our own arguments and sincerity have no value before God, and it is prayer that eventually understands that the Name of Jesus is enough.

It is often not for my own needs that I pray like this, but also when God comes to break my heart about something important: another's lost child, drug addicts, raped women or molested children and unreached people groups. It is prayer that focuses on a hurting world and on people that have no relationship with Jesus, irrespective of how evil and vile they are. Millions are wandering in the wilderness like sheep without a shepherd.

It is prayer that will consume me. It is like the prayer of Hannah in 1 Samuel. She had only one desire, one dream, one passion. Nothing else mattered: she had to have a child, and not just a child. It had to be a son, for only a son would take away her shame. It was specific prayer. She did not eat. She cried before God and did not care what people thought. Even the priest thought she was drunk, but that was of no importance to her. Her shame, her need and her pain were greater than the opinion of people.

Availability

Am I available when God has a prayer burden that He wants to give to me – an issue that needs to be prayer about till there is an answer? Or am I so busy in labouring for breakthroughs for my own needs, comfort and priorities that I am not available to Him and for His work? May God raise up more intercessors who will cry out to Him in desperate prayer!