

## 移山祷告的五要素——马可福音 11:20-26

### Five Key Elements of Mountain-moving Prayer —Mark 11:20-26

#### *Introduction and Outline*

- Scripture reading: Mark 11:12-14; Mark 11:20-26; James 1:5-8; 4:2-4;5:16-18  
Mark 11:20-26 (NASB 1995)  
20 As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. 21 Being reminded, Peter said to Him, “Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.” 22 And Jesus answered saying to them, “Have faith in God. 23 Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. 24 Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you. 25 Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. 26 [But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.]”
- We often speak of "mountain-moving faith," but such faith finds its expression in prayer. How much and how real one's faith in God is largely reflected in his prayer life.
- Prayer consists of many elements, and faith is only one of the key elements of proper prayer. There are many other elements that directly determine the quality of our prayer; therefore, prayer is a much larger concept.
- Outline:  
Title: Five Key Elements of Mountain-moving Prayer
  1. Historical Element (vv. 20-21)
  2. Theological Element (v. 22)
  3. Spiritual Element (v. 23)
  4. Practical Element (v. 24)
  5. Gospel Element (v. 25)

#### **Historical Element (vv. 20-21)**

- "and saw the fig tree withered from the roots up": Jesus had cursed the tree the day before (v. 14), but it did not immediately wither. That's because He wanted to save this lesson for the next day to see if the disciples would remember. When they do remember it, Jesus could then use it to teach them this lesson about prayer.
- "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered": In a broad sense, Peter is already praying here. Prayer isn't just asking for things; prayer in the broader sense is talking to God. By telling the Lord what he had observed, Peter was already praying. Even though he said it with a surprise of unbelief, it still is the beginning of prayer.

**【Principle】** Observing God's works and bringing them before God to tell him about His works is the beginning of prayer. Prayer should not be filled with requests for the present, but it should also remember God's works in the past.

【Illustration】 In Deuteronomy, there are no less than 20 commands that ask them to "Remember"; In Acts 4:24-30, the prayer for deliverance from trouble also begins with remembering God's works. Verse 24 remembers His work of creation; verses 25-26 remembers His Word which He has spoken.

【Application】 *"Let us take trouble to consider the Lord's dealings with us, and we shall surely receive soul-enriching views of His kindness and truth."* --A Pastor

### **Theological Element (v. 22)**

- "Have faith in God": this statement carries a rebuke to the disciples for not having enough faith in God. If they had believed in God enough, they wouldn't have been so surprised as to say, "How did the fig tree wither?" God's will is for it to wither; God's power can make it wither; God has already said it explicitly: May no one ever eat fruit from you again. What is so strange about that?

On the other hand, faith in God also believes He can use His disciples' prayer to accomplish things. Matthew 21:21 says, "if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree," but you can even move mountains. This means cursing the fig tree is not Jesus' prerogative as God; if you have faith in God, you can do it too!

【Emphasis】 From the perspective of Jesus' human nature, the cursing of the fig tree was a prayer by a real man to the heavenly Father. This is something the disciples can emulate. Disciples can draw from God's power through prayer. The key for that kind of prayer is to have faith in God.

【Discernment】 The key to prevent abuse lies in the fact that the emphasis of faith in God is not "faith" but "God". The point of faith in God is not so much personal subjective faith, but it is the objective reality of who God is and what He wants us to pursue. If our faith is in the true God, we would not ask for wanton things.

【Expand】 Faith in God entails God's **attributes**, God's **power**, God's **will**, God's **providence**, God's **promises**, God's **timing**, God's **ways**, and God's **purposes**. ..... It is not a partial faith in a part of God, but a wholesome faith in **the God revealed in the Bible**. The object of belief is not the god of our own imagination but the God that the whole Bible reveals to us.

【Discernment】 God's will is not for Christians to pursue spectacular experiences like miracles or tongues, so the faith-in-God kind of prayer won't even ask for these things. God's will is for Christians to grow spiritually, to live a sanctified life, to love one another, to do the work of the gospel so sinners may be saved, so the faith-in-God kind of prayer will certainly ask much for these things.

【Application】 *"The believer who prays remembering what God has already done, and the believer who prays trusting that the best of all things is the will of God—that believer unleashes Heaven's power."* --A Pastor

### **Spiritual Element (v. 23)**

- "does not doubt in his heart, ...it will be granted him": Now here is the emphasis on faith, that is, faith without any doubt.

**James 1:6-7** "But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord"

【Explanation】 The faith here is not basic saving faith, but **the faith that seeks God prayerfully in all things**. The emphasis here is not the content or object of faith, but **faith itself**, or, **the size/strength of faith**. When a Christian prays for God's will with undoubting faith, he receives God's power even to move mountains.

【Explanation】 What exactly does moving mountains refer to? Not an exaggeration, not a metaphor, but an example! Not just a hyperbole to illustrate the power of prayer, not just a metaphor for a difficulty as big as a mountain, but moving mountains is a vivid and concrete example. That is, if there is an occasion when you genuinely feel that it is God's will to move an actual mountain, then you pray with the undoubting faith that God is really going to move this mountain through your prayer! This statement can be taken completely literally.

【Discernment】 The premise is that you genuinely feel that God's will is to move a literal mountain. I've never had that thought, have you? That's why literal mountain-moving prayer never happens.

【Application】 This has a significant bearing on our **attitude of prayer**. If moving mountains is just an exaggeration, is it exaggeration to ask God to heal someone with advanced pancreatic cancer? Is it exaggeration to ask God to give repentant faith to an unbeliever so he may be saved? **Jesus means to enlarge our faith here, not to condone our little faith. He wants us to pray boldly for those "impossible things"!**

【Discernment】 If in the end God does not do it, then you know it is not God's will; but when you pray, you must believe wholeheartedly that it is God's will. If there is any doubt, you cannot expect God to answer your prayers.

【Expand】 How can we have this kind of faith? Only by constantly studying and obeying God's word to know more and more of God's will can we truly believe our prayer is in line with God's will; and only by striving wholeheartedly to live in God's will can we truly have the undoubting faith that our prayers are indeed for God's glory and not for our own selfish desires.

*"According to our faith will be the degree of our peace, our hope, our joy, our decision in Christ's service, our boldness in confession, our strength in work, our patience in trial, our resignation in trouble, our sensible comfort in prayer. All, all will hinge on the proportion of our faith."* – A Pastor

### **Practical Element (v. 24)**

- "all things for which you pray and ask": The emphasis here is pray and ask. Speak it out loud. Tell it to God.

**James 4:2** "You do not have because you do not ask.."

【Application】 I often hear people say they don't know how to pray. Why? Is not prayer simply telling God in faith what you want for His glory? Don't you want anything for His glory? If you do, don't you know how to tell it to your heavenly Father?

- "all things ": marriage, children, work, health ..... anything. As long as you believe it is God's will for you to have it and that the result of having it is God's glory.
- "they will be granted you": There are times even Jesus' prayer seemed not to be granted (Mk 14:36). But since His prayer included "yet not what I will, but what You will," you can say He was granted. God's will was indeed granted to Him.

### **Gospel Element (v. 25)**

- Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone": Not that you needn't forgive at other times, but to emphasize that forgiveness is especially important for prayer, because having an unforgiving heart will directly block our prayers from reaching God.
- Psalm 66:18** "If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear."
- "so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions": Forgiveness is the foundation of our relationship with God. The reason we can pray to God is because He has forgiven our sins, so forgiveness underlies prayer.

**Isaiah 59:2** "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear."

**【Theology】** God's judicial forgiveness as Judge is a one-time event, but God's paternal forgiveness as Father is an ongoing need for believers because our sin still affects our relationship with the Father, placing us under His discipline. This is the spiritual truth behind **John 13:10** where Jesus distinguishes between **bathing** and **foot washing**.

**【Conclusion】** If we do not forgive, we will not receive forgiveness from the Father, and we cannot expect Him to hear our prayers.