

WATCH AND PRAY!

(Bro. Bakht Singh, Balance of Truth 1966, October)

I believe the Lord has some thing to say to us from these simple and well-known words. The message in Mark 13 was given just before the last supper which the Lord had with His disciples. Our Lord had come to Jerusalem for the last time before being crucified, and the disciples were showing Him the beautiful places at Jerusalem. One of the disciples said to Him: "Master! see what manner of stones and what buildings are here !" It might have been Judas, because he was so easily deceived by worldly attractions.

The believer too, can be drawn away by worldly glories, grand buildings, and prosperity. That seems to be the greatest danger today throughout the world. How many believers have lost their joy, their peace and their first love, because of the deception of the world. It is much more obvious these days in Western countries which are much more prosperous than other countries, and we see there how very good believers are now living a luke-warm life. The Lord said these things as a warning to all His disciples.

"Seest thou these great buildings" He said: "They shall be thrown down". Everything of man will come one day to naught. There will be an end to every man-made thing. All great kingdoms of the past came thus to an end. In the same way all the beautiful buildings, of which men are so proud today, will one day fall to pieces, even as the wonderful cities of the past have become heaps of rubbish.

Ezekiel prophesied against the city of Tyrus, which in those days was a wonderful city, and even in the days of the Lord Jesus Christ was still a very wealthy and famous city. What did Ezekiel prophesy against that city? (Read Ezek. 26: 3-5, 13, 17). How true these words have been. Lately I was on the site of Tyrus, in Lebanon. As the Scriptures prophesied, the whole city has become a heap of rubbish. In those days it was a wonderful city, very wealthy and well-known for its trade and grandeur and beauty. About twenty years ago, men began to excavate the city of Tyrus. Only a few years ago men used to find small pieces of gold and precious stones near by the sea shore, then they began to excavate, and now they have uncovered a good bit of the city. One can see the kind of life men lived those days. The streets were paved with beautiful mosaic stones and huge columns of marble were used for their buildings. With one shock of an earthquake the whole city fell

down and became a heap of rubbish. Now at the same site men go and catch fish. As the Scripture prophesied, most of the city is under water (Ezek. 26: 12).

Along the same coast, Paul journeyed from Jerusalem to Tyrus (Acts 21: 3). In those days also it was still a very wealthy city, but prophecy was fulfilled, and it became a heap of rubbish. In the same way, whatever has been prophesied by the Lord Jesus Christ will be fulfilled one day. The Lord Jesus Christ warned His disciples to be very careful, and not to be carried away by worldly grandeur and the beauty of buildings.

How many people cut short their quiet time and devotion, because of the temptation to earn money and to get more wealth, and the result is that they do not even know how to pray. This is one of saddest lacks, these days, amongst believers in many of the Western countries. Even though they have plenty of Bible knowledge, and are eager to know more about the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and even though they read many books and attend many meetings and can play all kinds of instruments and music and sing beautifully and at great length, yet when they come to a prayer meeting they cannot pray properly. They can hardly sustain prayer for a minute in a prayer meeting. At first, I thought they did not have enough time, so they prayed briefly; but when I began to pray with them alone, I began to discover the same thing. They could not pray for a long time. They do not know the real joy of prayer.

The Lord Jesus Christ gave a very simple remedy for conquering all the temptations of these last days. He said, "What I say unto you, I say unto all; Watch!" It is only by that weapon against the enemy, that we shall conquer him in the end-days. Whatever be our temptations or trials or sufferings, we shall find that all our questions can only be answered by that one simple thing, learning how to pray.

Perhaps you are under the impression that you know how to pray. If so, why are your difficulties and troubles so complicated? Why do you look so miserable? Why is your life so defeated? Why are you so easily carried away by worldly friends? or worldly attractions, or worldly honours? Why are you so easily frightened when you even hear bad news,—why does your heart begin to beat so fast?

I knew of a very good believer who knew God's Word very well. He had also spent many years in preaching. One day, he got the news that he would be losing his property, which he had preserved for many years. He had not yet lost it, but when

the news was given that he might possibly lose it, straightway his heart began to thump and he began to perspire. The whole family thought he would pass away and they gathered around him. They were holding his hands and his feet for he was helpless. Then he heard that it was not true, and he quickly recovered. How easy it is to be disturbed by perishing things. That is why so many are living lives of misery, defeat, and shame. They do not know how to pray. In this chapter the Lord is showing us clearly how to pray. We can defeat the enemy in every situation, simply by learning how to pray. Luke. 22:31.

“Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat.” That can happen to all of us. The devil can come up against us at different times, and in different ways. These words were not spoken by our Lord to unbelievers. He took His chosen disciples Peter, James and John to a high mountain, and said these words to them. Satan can sift us through poverty, disappointment, sickness and suffering, and by other means also. God allows these things to remove the chaff from the wheat. Our Lord said, “Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat.” He did not say that He would not allow Satan to have Peter, but He said, ‘I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.’ Luke 22:32. “And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

When He had showed them how to travail in prayer, He went into the Garden of Gethsemane, and He Himself travailed in prayer. In the same way if we wish to prevail, we must strive and persevere in prayer, till we are sure that the devil has been defeated, otherwise the enemy will take advantage. Ordinary so-called prayer, repeating words and phrases cannot help. The disciples had been told clearly beforehand what might happen in that period or afterwards. Mk. 13:5: “Take heed lest any man deceive you.” The devil will use the strongest weapons to deceive us. He can deceive us (1) through false teaching, (2) through our negligence or carelessness, (3) through worldly prosperity, and (4) through all kinds of attractions and affection. The real test is that the burden for prayer and the desire for prayer will become less and less. You may be able to attend meetings for a long time, and never feel tired about it, but when you begin to pray you go to sleep. This is a common complaint. You may try to pray but you will not succeed. “Lest coming suddenly, He find you sleeping.” Mk. 13:36. Once you cut short your time of prayer, you will be deceived by the Enemy and you are bound to fall into temptation. It does not take long to fall into temptation. Our Lord gives a warning in Mk. 13:7, 8. “These things are the beginning of sorrows.” You may go either to Western or Eastern

countries, and there you will find great preparations going on for war. More than half of the national income is being spent on weapons of war. But human schemes cannot take away the conditions which lead to war. In the same way there are famines of wheat and rice and soon there is going to be a famine for the Word of God. Amos. 8:11, 12. "Behold . . . I will send a famine". Men will wander from street to street and from sea to sea. Though there are many church buildings, and Bible colleges and schools, there are **very few** preachers and Bible teachers who give the pure Word of God.

In India you find there very many people who very cleverly put water in milk. In Madras they bring the cow to your very door, and milk the cow, and though you watch very carefully, and think there is no water in the milk, yet you will surely find a mixture of water in the milk! In the same way there are preachers also who mix many things in God's Word. They do not give the pure Word of God, but bring in all kinds of other things. People will wander from place to place and country to country to receive the pure Word of God. One sign of the end-days is a famine for God's Word. For all these things the remedy is **prayer**.

In these days you cannot get good rice even though you pay a good price, and in some places there is not enough rice.

For both cases the remedy is the same—prayer. By prayer can bad rice become good rice? You try it! Do not murmur or complain. The Lord blesses the food and multiplies it and even if you want a large quantity of rice, the Lord is able to bless that which you have. I have tried this secret many a time, and every thing tastes so nice.

Recently I have travelled in many countries, and have had to eat many kinds of food. Wherever I went I had good food. I never said at any time that I wanted rice or 'rasam'. To me everything was equally tasty because of prayer.

You will also find by prayer that every question can be answered. Whatever it may be, your spiritual or physical need can be met. Whatever be your limitations, by learning how to pray and persevere you have the answer. If you are honest with yourself, and go before God for your need, the Lord will tell you how your prayer life has been extremely weak and poor, and that is why there is barrenness and defeat and failure in your life. You may find your problems complicated and very hard to solve. Mark 13:9, 12, 13. Maybe you are being hated by some body. Maybe your children have come up against you. Maybe your parents do not like you because of

your testimony. All these things can be solved by prayer. Mk. 13:23, 31, 33. There is no need to be governed by signs and conditions,—only by prayer, and you will find that every question will be fully answered by God Himself. I do not know of any question that has not been answered by prayer. The Lord Jesus Christ has been so faithful; even though we fail Him and grieve Him, by going to Him and talking to Him, we have the answer. Ask the Lord Jesus Christ to teach you how to pray. Luke. 9:18. He taught His disciples how to pray. Before His public ministry, He prayed. He began His public ministry by prayer (Luke 3:21), not by miracles, or teaching or sermons. As He was found praying, and as He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended, and a Voice came. That was the sermon which the Lord gave at the river Jordan! There were many people standing around Him with many problems. He knew their thoughts, He knew their needs and He began to pray! And when He prayed, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came down, and the Voice from Heaven said: "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Lord Jesus Christ thus gave the best sermon: "Oh, ye people! all your questions can be answered by learning how to pray. When you know how to pray, the heavens will be opened, the Holy Ghost will come upon you, and the Voice of God will be heard saying, I am well pleased with you". In many cases people do not know how to pray, and there is merely a repetition of words and phrases. Oh! it is a wonderful privilege to speak to the Lord.

Our whole life can be measured by our prayer life. I have met many preachers who can preach very well, but I wait till they pray, then I know how they are spiritually. You cannot be governed by their teaching or preaching, but by their prayer life. Learn how to pray. May the Lord help us to learn how to watch and pray, so that we may get the victory.

(To be continued) (It is said Part 1, continued and I do not see in any issues the continuation of this subject)