

Luke 18 - That Men Should Always Pray

Luk 18:1-43 NIV Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that **they should always pray and not give up.**

The teaching of Jesus is that we should ALWAYS PRAY and NOT GIVE UP.

Why do we give up?

- It takes **commitment**, time and quiet (things many of us do not enjoy)
- I am **inconsistent** - Daniel prayed for 21 days before he got an answer
- I am **spiritually lazy** or weary and faint-hearted - The spirit is willing the flesh is weak
- I prayed and **he didn't answer** - take this cup from me (Jesus) - remove this thorn (Paul)
 - sometimes it is yes, sometimes no, sometimes wait

The greatest tragedy (whatever the reason we give up) is that we would become accustom to living a life of prayerlessness

In this chapter Jesus appeals to the Character of God as He teaches us to pray

I pray because HE Hears

2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' 4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'" 6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 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? 8 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?"

- He tells a story that is meant to direct our focus up God (the Lord's prayer is similar)
- He shares about an UNJUST judge to show the heavenly father is NOT like this
- The focus is not so much on BEING persistent as it is on giving a REASON to be persistent

He HEARS

- Act 10:2 & 31 NIV He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and ***prayed to God regularly.*** ... 31 and said, 'Cornelius, ***God has heard your prayer*** and remembered your gifts to the poor.
- Psalms 34:15 & 17 NIV The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry; ... (17) The righteous cry out, ***and the LORD hears them;*** he delivers them from all their troubles.

- 1 John 5:14 NIV This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that ***if we ask anything according to his will***, he hears us.
- James 5:16 NIV Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. ***The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.***
- Psalms 102:17 NIV ***He will respond*** to the prayer of the destitute; ***he will not despise their plea.***

I pray because He is Merciful to the Sinner

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and ***those who humble themselves will be exalted.***"

It is so easy to see the fault in another and allow pride to reign in our hearts
He teaches us humility

Let us come boldly

- Hebrews 4:14-16 NIV Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. (15) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin. (16) Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.
- Jas 5:16 KJV Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

I pray because He is my Father

15 People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. 16 But ***Jesus called the children to him*** and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not ***receive the kingdom of God like a little child*** will never enter it."

- A child looks to the parent for nourishment
- A child is taught and disciplined by the parent
- There is a love between parent and child that is unique to the human experience

- He taught us to prayer “Our Father” who art in heaven
- The Holy Spirit given to us cries “ABBA”
- Jesus wants children to come to him
- Children receive the things of the kingdom

I pray because He tells me the truth and Nothing is impossible for Him

18 A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone. 20 You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'" 21 "All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. 22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 23 When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. 24 Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25 Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." 26 Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?" 27 Jesus replied, "***What is impossible with man is possible with God.***" 28 Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!" 29 "Truly I tell you," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30 will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life."

Sometimes the Lord asks us to do things that seem impossible

- Forgive that person
- Give to the need of another
- Share the gospel, or prophesy
- In this case to sell everything to follow Him
 - in one sense this is a general call to all of us that NOTHING would stand in the way

The confidence is that what seems impossible to us IS POSSIBLE WITH GOD

- We need to move this from the theoretical into the real and the practical
- We can say all day that “all things are possible with God” - and walk out of the church unwilling to forgive because it seems to hard

I pray because He knows the future and I can TRUST Him

31 Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "***We are going up to Jerusalem,*** and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. 32 He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; 33 they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again." 34 ***The disciples did not understand any of this.*** Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

There will be times that we do not understand

- Lord only you have the words of eternal life (will you leave me also?)
- **That He is with us is enough**

- Exo 33:13-14 NIV If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people." 14 The LORD replied, "***My Presence will go with you***, and I will give you rest."

I pray because He wants me to ASK

35 As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. 36 When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. 37 They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." 38 He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 39 Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 40 Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, 41 "***What do you want me to do for you?***" "Lord, I want to see," he replied. 42 Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." 43 Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

Exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think

- Ephesians 3:20 NIV Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

You have not because you asked not

- James 4:2-3 NIV You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. (3) When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

What is the greatest thing you have asked God for lately?

CLOSING COMMENTS

The LORD has spoken to us in prophecy last week to be people of prayer and to be prepared for whatever work he wants to do with us and in us.

Let us not become comfortable with prayerlessness.

Let us answer the question:

When He Returns, will he find faith on the earth? with a resounding YES

- Remind us that you HEAR our prayer
- Give us a heart of humility
- Give us a child-like faith
- Help us to trust you even when we do not understand
- Let us simply be willing to ASK --- KNOWING that you want to hear and respond