

LUKE 18.1-8

NEVER NEVER STOP PRAYING

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT—

Jesus said to his disciples . . .

- ▶ As Jesus continues on his mission to Jerusalem, he repeatedly addresses his disciples, emphasizing the need to be alert and not preoccupied, faithful and not lazy
- ▶ Much of what Jesus says to his disciples is focused on the future, specifically, his second coming and the prevailing sociological and spiritual conditions (see 17.26-36)



*Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them
that they should always pray and never give up.*

However, when the Son of Man comes,

will he find faith on the earth?

– Luke 18.1, 8

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always . . .

- ▶ In light of what he has just described about the prevailing conditions when he returns, Jesus emphasizes the critical need for “always-never-give-up prayer” (vs. 1)
- ▶ Jesus illustrates this “always-never-give-this-up” attitude with the “harassing persistence” of a widow dealing with a corrupt “couldn’t-care-less” judge (vss. 2-5)

- ▶ Jesus directly connects this lifestyle of “non-negotiable-always” prayer with having faith and being in true relationship with God—“chosen ones” (vss. 7-8)
- ▶ Jesus further emphasizes this “always-never-give-up” prayerfulness with the description “cry out to [God] day and night (vs. 7)
- ▶ Jesus foresees that many will stop praying and lose faith in the time preceding the second coming (vs. 8)

ALWAYS PRAY—

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and never give up.

- ▶ It is not what we know about prayer or that we say prayers. This is the issue: Is my lifestyle as a Christ-follower characterized by constant, undeterred “always-never-give-up” praying?

IF WE SAY IT'S IMPORTANT, WHY DON'T WE DO IT?

- ▶ physical weakness – we are tired and fall asleep
- ▶ lack of discipline – we don't prioritize time for prayer and are controlled by other impulses and inclinations
- ▶ indifference – we aren't affected by the needs, tragedies, or eternal destiny of others
- ▶ spiritual coldness – we have little desire for God's presence
- ▶ outright rebellion – we simply choose not to pray
- ▶ losing heart – discouragement: the answer hasn't come

JESUS TOLD A PARABLE TO SHOW THEM—

“There was once a judge in some city who never gave God a thought and cared nothing for people. A widow in that city kept after him: ‘My rights are being violated. Protect me!’ “He never gave her the time of day. But after this went on and on, he said to himself, “I care nothing what God thinks, even less what people think. But because this widow won’t quit badgering me, I’d better do something and see that she gets justice—otherwise I’m going to end up beaten black and blue by her pounding!’ ”

ANOTHER “LESSER TO GREATER” TEACHING—

Then the Lord said, “Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don’t you think God will surely give justice to His chosen people who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off?

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven, give good gifts to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7.11)



Delay will test our faith— have I become discouraged, started to lose heart, begun to believe that I will never see the answer? Or is my faith still strong, confident in the character of God, determined not to take “no” for an answer or to stop short of having in hand the fulfillment of my faith?

“

When faith fails, prayer dies.

In order to pray then, we must have faith.”

– St. Augustine

TO STOP (OR GIVE UP) PRAYING IS TO—

- ▶ lose sight of God and His purposes
- ▶ focus on the “here and now” as what is most important to me
- ▶ stop living for the return of Jesus
- ▶ believe God to be unjust and unfaithful
- ▶ become faithless and unresponsive to God
- ▶ live without the purposes of God being fulfilled in my life

WHAT IF . . .

*What if the widow had stopped pleading her case
a week earlier?*

*What if, discouraged by the delay,
she had given up yesterday?*



But be on your guard. Don't let the sharp edge of your expectation get dulled by parties and drinking and worry. Otherwise, that Day is going to take you by complete surprise, spring on you suddenly like a trap, for it's going to come on everyone, everywhere, at once. So, whatever you do, don't go to sleep! Pray constantly that you will have the strength and wits to make it through everything that's coming and end up on your feet before the Son of Man."

— Luke 21.34-36

SEEING CLEARLY

RESULTS

2020