

Always Pray - Never Lose Heart Pt.4

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Luke 18:1-8 ESV

1 And he told them a parable TO THE EFFECT that they ought ALWAYS TO PRAY and NOT LOSE HEART (*ekkakeo* - discouraged, give up, grow weary, exhausted).

2 He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man.

3 And there was a widow in that city WHO KEPT COMING TO HIM and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.'

4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man,

5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down BY HER CONTINUAL COMING."

6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says.

7 And will not God give justice to his elect, WHO CRY TO HIM DAY AND NIGHT? Will he delay long over them?

8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, WILL HE FIND FAITH ON EARTH?"

- *It is the heart of your heavenly Father to provide the answer as soon as possible.*
- *If for whatever reason you have to wait for the answer, will you wait patiently and contentedly trusting that God is right and good in all that He does?*
- *One of the most necessary virtues in prayer is the balance of fervent prayer coupled with a trusting contentment.*

Hebrews 10:35-39 ESV

35 Therefore do not throw away (*apoballo* - to throw without caring where it falls) your confidence, which has a great reward.

36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

37 For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay;

38 but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him."

39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

1 Kings 18:41-45 ESV

41 And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain."

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees.

43 And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." And he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go again," seven times.

44 And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'"

45 And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.

5 Reasons to Never Give Up in Prayer

1. **God is working even when we see no natural indications** - *God's Word is our vision.*

2 Kings 6:15-17 ESV

15 When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

16 He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

2 Corinthians 5:7 ESV

7 for we walk (*peripateō* - to regulate one's life, to conduct one's self) **by faith, not by sight.**

2 Corinthians 4:18 ESV

18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Hebrews 11:1 ESV

1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Romans 8:25 ESV

25 ...if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Romans 4:18-22 ESV

18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be."

19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,

21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

22 That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."

If disappointment and discouragement has replaced your hope, joy, anticipation and expectancy, your faith in the unseen needs to be rekindled by the Word and Spirit of God.

2. **There is nothing impossible with God** - *never exalt the circumstances, this world or other people above God.*

Luke 1:35-37 ESV

35 And the angel answered her [Mary], "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy--the Son of God.

36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

37 For nothing will be impossible with God."

Genesis 18:14 ESV

14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."

Jeremiah 32:17 ESV

17 Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

Jeremiah 32:27 ESV

27 Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?

Mark 10:26-27 ESV

26 And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?"

27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."

Acts 12:1-19 ESV

1 About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church.

2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword,

3 and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread.

4 And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people.

5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

6 Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison.

7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands.

8 And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me."

9 And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.

10 When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him.

11 When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued

me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

12 When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

13 And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer.

14 Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate.

15 They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!"

16 But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed.

17 But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place.

18 Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter.

19 And after Herod searched for him and did not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time there.

3. **God does not work according to our expectations or plans** - *His ways and methods are incomprehensible, never predictable and many times seem contradictory.*

We can become discouraged, weary and give up in prayer if we presume to think that we know how God will accomplish His will and answer our prayers.

His ways and methods are incomprehensible...

Isaiah 55:8-11 ESV

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

His ways and methods are unpredictable...

Isaiah 43:16-21 ESV

16 Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters,

17 who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:

18 Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.

19 Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

20 The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people,

21 the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.

His ways and methods can seem contradictory...

Matthew 16:21-23 ESV

21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."

23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

John 11:5-33 ESV

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

6 So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

7 Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

8 The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?"

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

10 But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

11 After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him."

12 The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."

13 Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep.

14 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died,

15 and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

16 So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off,

19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house.

21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

22 But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet

shall he live,

26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you."

29 And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him.

30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him.

31 When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

32 Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

4. God gives the grace, the strength, the patience and the contentment to wait for our prayers to be answered, every time without fail.

Isaiah 40:29-31 ESV

29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted;

31 but they who wait (*qavah* - wait, patiently tarry, look for, hope, expect) for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

"They who wait for the Lord..."

- *Not becoming hardened, frustrated, angry or bitter with God.*
- *Not seeking fleshly, human or worldly solutions.*
- *Remaining surrendered and content.*

Romans 4:19-21 ESV

19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,

21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

God always give:

- *Strength and endurance.*
- *Peace and contentment.*
- *Spiritual treasures.*

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 ESV

7 So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- *What we gain in our communion with God during the waiting is far greater than any suffering and pain.*

Luke 10:38-42 ESV

38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.

40 But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."

41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things,

42 but one thing is necessary (*chreia* - necessity, duty, business). Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

- *In times of great distraction and stress, by comparison, only one thing is truly necessary, sitting at the feet of Jesus.*

Psalms 27:2-5 ESV

2 When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

4 One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

5 For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.