

S.W. - March 6, 77 AM

PRAYER OR FAINTING

Yesterday, People Called The President, Luke 18:1-8
Every Call Christian puts Through is Answered By The Ruler of Heaven + Earth
Estimated 9 1/2 million called - 200 Reached Media Center #2 Family

This is a parable that tells the kind of thing which could happen, and did happen often, in Palestine. There are many many things about this parable that are very obvious.

One of the main things is concerned with fainting. "Not To faint" "Less you wear me out by her continual coming." This is one of the most remarkable things in a sense that the Bible says anywhere about the prayer life. They ought always to pray and not to faint.

The statement like this is staggering to Christian men and women. Evidently the intention is that we should be men and women of prayer, having our appointed times, seasons, and habits of prayer - and believing in prayer. Paul said, "pray without ceasing."

Men and women today will say, "I have had a busy time. I have really been too busy today with my work to take time to pray. I have so pressed with my duties and my work the last week, that I have had little time to pray. I know that the need is there. I ought to pray at least one, two, or three times regularly as possible, each day.

The word to faint means to be (paralyzed) - it means to be weak, to be worthless. It is to feel the force of dying. Of vigor passing away. To be beaten, to be broken, to be down, to be helpless. To faint.

I heard Dr. Wallace Chappell once tell about his experience in preaching a sermon once. He decided that in the middle of the sermon, he would stop and sing

a song. So this he did. He got the idea from some other preacher who had a habit of doing that. He'd preach awhile, and then in the middle of the sermon - he would sing. So he stopped and sang a song.

An 82 year old woman said Mr. Chappell, I love to hear you sing. She said, when I sing, I love to sing myself. But I feel so self-conscious. But she said, when you sing, you look unconscious.

Now the emphasis here is that you are to pray and not faint. Not to become unconscious. And of course the parable winds up with the idea - that when the Lord comes will he find faith here.

Now today we are talking about something that is always new, it is always fresh. Because this is one of the greatest needs that we have today - to find a quiet place to pray.

A great scholar, Dr. Stewart said, "the greatest illness in the church is prayer paralysis." I wonder what you think about that. A life of powerlessness becomes prayerlessness. What has God said to you today. What have you said to God today.

You remember in the Old Testament, there was a lad by the name of Samuel. Just a young boy. He was in the temple. And God had something to say to him. And finally when Samuel found out - he said, "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth." Now young people, men, and women need to have the same experience.

There is a judge in the story. He was clearly not a Jewish judge. Because ordinarily Jewish disputes were taken to the elders and not the public courts. One man could not constitute a court. Three judges - one was chosen for the plaintiff - the other for the defendant, and one independent judge.

Now this judge was one who was paid as a magistrate. He was appointed by Herod or by the Romans. And he could be bribed with money. And that was the way that many people got their verdict settled. They say that if you placed a dish of meat before him, you could get what you wished.

The other character in the story is a widow. She was a symbol of all that was defenseless. She had no hope of every extracting justice or judgement from the Judge.

But the widow had one weapon - the weapon of persistance. And the judge in other cases feared actual physical violence. And he knew that less she exhaust me - and that means to give me a black eye. Now you can close a person's eye by either sleep or assault.

The real effect of these parables that we have in the Gospels teach us the same lesson.

We considered the friend at midnight. Who came asking for loaves. As a real effort to get the blessing desired.

Now these parables show us the spirit in which we approach God.

We might ask the question why should God be represented as one that needs to be really gone back too time and time again. Is not God ready to hear.

The truth is, the narrow-hearted and selfish man is set against the liberality of God. The unrighteousness of man is contrasted to the righteousness of God.

Now these parables teach us and exhort us in the matter of continuance - always praying - not to faint.

The word importunity is a very striking one. It means shamelessness. It is no where else used in the New Testament. A curious word to use about prayer.

What makes a man ashamed to ask a favor. First, either he doubts the friend's ability to grant it, or second, he is conscious that he is asking for the wrong thing. Third, he has a feeling that some unworthiness in himself will prevent his friend from listening to him.

Such shame is fatal to true prayer.

If you doubt God's power, if we are asking for what we know we ought not to have, or if we feel our unworthiness - it will bar the blessing. How's come we pray earnestly. And pray without fainting.

Now if you have a conviction that God is able to do what we desire, and what we desire is according to his will - and our very unworthiness is our claim upon his free mercy in Christ. That will render us shameless in our persistence. No sense of shame will stop us.

Now let us note two or three things about this widow.

First, she believed. She truly believed that this judge was able to do for her

what needed to be done.

You remember the story of the father who brought his son to Jesus. The Disciples could not help him. And Jesus said to the man, "if you have faith, then it is possible. God can do much with us - if we believe that he can.

"Lord, I have faith - help me where my faith falls short."

Jairus, the head of the synagogue - came to Jesus about his little girl. When he came, the little girl was dead. Jesus said, don't be afraid - just believe in me.

Believe then becomes the opposite of fear. And Jesus touched the little girl and the little girl healed. And was living.

The widow believed that the Judge would meet her needs. And answer her request. She believed this with all of her heart.

It was one of the main characteristics about this woman.

Second, her belief was active. She put her faith into action. Now this was more than a mental experience. This faith, this belief that she had, in the Judge is here pointed out for us. It says that she went back to him. And back to him. And back to him - over and over again.

Third, her belief was enduring. V. 5 It says lest her continual coming - she

went back to the Judge, she went back to the Judge - over and over again. Her faith, her belief was real. It was accurate. And it was stable. In that she did not give up - she kept on and on, and on.

I read a story about Dr. Raymond Lenquist who tells about a 16 year old Junior in High School who boasted that he was a ladies man. He went to the drugstore and he was talking to the druggist. He told the druggist that the girls were wild about him at High School. And he wanted a one pound box of candy, and a two pound box of candy, and a three pound box of candy. The druggist was just amazed. And he asked the young man how he could use three boxes of candy. So he went into detail with the druggist. He says I give them a one pound box of candy if they let me hold their hand. I give them a two pound box of candy if they let me slip my arm around them. And I give them a three pound box of candy if they let me kiss them.

So the druggist wrapped up the candy - that afternoon, this boy got all dressed and went out to get one of his many. She met him on the porch, and she said - come on in. We are getting ready to have dinner - so he went inside. And directly, the father and the mother came in. And the father called upon him to ask the blessing. To pray. He prayed, and he prayed, and he prayed. He prayed 15 minutes. His date leaned over and said, I didn't know you could pray like that. And the boy said, I didn't know that your Daddy was the druggist either.

That does make a difference. But we are not talking about that kind of praying this morning. But about the kind that we spoke of last Sunday. The asking kind, the seeking kind, the knocking kind, the believing kind.

The big things in life - in your life are power, love, forgiving heart, the grace of God.

Think about what Jesus was able to do because the man believed. He took Peter - who was a swearing fisherman and made him a preacher. He took a son of thunder and made John a man who was capable of writing Gospels.

Jesus Christ can take you - he can really take nothing - and he can make every-
thing out of it if you really believe. This widow went back.

Peter was in prison and the church prayed for him in the book of Acts. And the angel removed the chains and when Peter came to the gate and knocked - the girl said our prayers have been answered - and some of the people couldn't believe it.

Fourth, belief brought results. V. 5 This Judge expresses himself why this widow, he says, has come back and back - which has been a revelation of her belief, her faith, the action of it. The enduring part of it. And now he says, because of this - I will avenge her less by her continual coming. She worries me. She wears me out is what he said.

She got victory right there. She got a triumph in her soul right at that point. And that is where you will get it - and that is where I'll get it. When we make that commitment that Jesus made on the cross - into thy hands I commit my spirit. Now that was a great prayer that Jesus prayed - and that was a dark Friday, but because he prayed that prayer - it opened the way for Easter day.

I heard a story about John Porter, who was a chaplain in Vietnam. He prayed for soldiers and he tried to help them. He prayed for a man named Gus. And this

man sent him a letter - Dear Chaplain, I am not much with words. First, you know the kind of guy I've been. You know my bluff.

Second, you made me see myself. I didn't find Hell over here in Vietnam. I brought it with me, in my heart.

Third, I don't know how to pray. But last night, I told God to help me - to count me in. I've been such a wicked person that I didn't want to ask one of the regular preachers, to baptize me - so last night I went down to the creek and baptized myself.

When I proved that I'm not kidding about this - will you do it again, the way a minister of God ought to do it.

He signed the letter - "a new member on God's team" - Gus.

Before this letter reached the chaplain - Gus was dead. He had been killed.

As I read that, you can count me in - into thy hand I commend my spirit.

Is the greatest weakness in your life the lack of prayer. Wouldn't you like to say - count me in. Even today?

V. 8 - I tell you, Jesus said, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith, like this on the earth. Isn't that marvelous - here is a word we can take a hold of. Speedily, we know. Without any delay, without any wait, without any hesitation. The deliverance will be the reward

and it will be yours. God will not delay one moment beyond the necessary time.
God is most eager for the moment to come. There shall no longer delay, when he
shall wipe away every tear from the eyes of his children. And ~~every sin from~~
their hearts, blot out.