

Title: ALWAYS PRAY, LUKE 18:1 – 8
(Chatham, NJ; 10/20/13, AM) [Pc – Narrative Analysis; Double-Edged Sword]

Theme: Persistence in prayer is determined by the amount of faith we have, and true faith exhibits the quality of persistence.

Purpose: To demonstrate that faith, prayer, and persistence combine to make a life pleasing in the sight of God.

Introduction:

1. Yesterday we began our yearly Forty Days of Prayer.
2. These forty days are practice for a lifetime of prayer.
3. We mustn't think that it's over after this.
4. Many people can endure something for a short time if they think it will end.
5. We think that a diet or exercise routine will solve some physical things, and when the routine is over, then we can go back to doing what we did before.
6. Do we have the discipline to persist in anything?
7. When the going gets tough, are you one of the tough who gets going?

I. The Kingdom Delayed, Luke 17:22-37

- A. You'll long to see the "days of the Son of Man" (22)
 1. Could be the fulfillment of their Messianic expectations at that time
 2. Could be a message for us who wait for the 2nd Coming, also a fulfillment of our Messianic expectations
 3. Either way, there will be some delay
 4. Don't look for it here or there
 5. It will be obvious, 24
- B. Suffering first, 25
 1. The Son of Man must suffer many things
 2. Will we not also endure the same things as our teacher?
 3. He must be rejected by his people
 4. The world cannot tolerate the disciples, John 15:18-20
- C. As in the days of Noah, 26
 1. Many will just keep on doing what they've always done, 27
 2. Sodom was also surprised; even Lot's wife, 28-30
 3. The Kingdom will take them like a thief, 1 Thess. 5:2-3 (read)
 4. This passage also describes the destruction of Jerusalem, 31-35; also a surprise to the people of that day who didn't recognize Christ's coming
 5. Jesus warned us, "Many are called, but few are chosen."
 6. Are we prepared for the coming?
 7. Are we prepared for the delay of his coming?

II. The Persistent Widow, 18:1-8 (Ironically, it is a widow who has no power or influence that demonstrates true grit and faith.)

- A. Always pray, 1
 1. David prayed regularly, Psalm 5:3
 2. Daniel prayer 3xs a day, even (especially?) under duress, Dan. 6:10
 3. Psalm 119:164 – 7xs (literally?)
 4. 119:169-170, a man of prayer
- B. Not lose heart, 1
 1. Psalm 10:1 reflects one concern in prayer: why aren't my prayers being heard?

2. Psalm 37:7 reminds us to wait for him
3. Once again, delay haunts the faithful Christian

C. She kept coming to him, 3

1. Did her friends think she was on a fool's errand?
2. Did they discourage her by saying it won't do any good?
3. Why wouldn't she listen when they told her, "You can't fight city hall"?
4. She succeeds; just like the neighbor who wouldn't leave his friend alone at night when he needed food for his guests.

D. Day and night, 7

1. This is how often the elect cry out to God
2. God is very much unlike the judge who didn't fear God or care about men, and very much unlike the neighbor who only got up because his friend bothered him
3. God will give justice quickly to those who cry out to him
4. Do you believe you have God's ear?

Conclusion:

1. The challenge: will the Son of Man find faith on the earth?
2. Will we give up because it seems we are on a fool's errand?
3. Will we persist in prayer?
4. Persistence in prayer corresponds directly to our faith: if we don't pray, our lives aren't going to be faithful.
5. Are we of those who shrink back, Heb. 10:35-39?
6. Will the Son of Man find us being faithful?