

God Will Never Fail You – Luke 18:1-8

Turn to Lk 18:1-8

Happy Mother's Day – trust you've thank God, and them for all they do/done

Back to our Ready or Not, Here I Come series – study the life of Christ from Luke

Looking at another parable Jesus told as worked his way toward Jerusalem, talking about life, death, and his eventual return

Read LK 18:1-8

If you've ever had a hard time in life . . .

Ever been discouraged and wanted to throw in the towel

Ever been low on hope and high on doubt

This is for you – if you haven't, you're either deceiving yourself, or living in a cave

Fact is – every one of us has been down in our life

Heard many testimonies of that last week –

“I was at the end of my rope, the bottom of the barrel and God got a hold of my life

“Can't thank him enough”

Every one of us has . . .

Wanted to give up; Wanted to stay in bed

Wondered if this book is true and God is real

Whether our lives make any difference

Or whether our prayers are even heard, let alone answered

Jesus intends in this parable, to bolster/encourage us to never give up, never stop believing

Not because we're blind optimists

But because God is a rock and he will never fail you

He will never fail to follow through on his promises

He will never fail to respond to your needs

He will never fail to answer your prayers

Which means – no matter how down and out you are; no matter how hopeless it seems

No matter how loud the silence is . . .

Never stop praying – God *will* answer

It's one of three reasons for telling the parable

1 – *he told them a parable* [so that] *they ought always to pray*

Just like the widow who persisted in approaching the unrighteous judge

We should persist in approaching the throne of grace to find mercy and help in time of need (Heb 4:16)

If an unrighteous judge will answer a social outcast . . .

How much more will a righteous God answer his own children whom he chose?

We can pray with confidence that God will answer

But pray we must

3 Questions

1. When's the last time you received an unmistakable answer to prayer?

If it's been awhile, it's probably because you haven't been praying much, or praying *for* much

Persistent prayer yields consistent answers – they may not be the answers you want, but they are answers nonetheless

The only people who doubt that, are those who don't pray – I used to be one of those

I was like – “what's all the commotion; what's the big deal?”

Then I started praying; Then I started praying in *faith* that God would answer

Then I started seeing the answers, which fueled me to pray even more

Persistent prayer yields consistent answers; Starts with conviction that God *will* answer

2. If you *have* been praying, do you pray with a pure heart?

James 5:16 – *The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*

Ps 66:18 – *If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.*

Sin and prayer don't mix; Righteousness matters

3. Do you pray as if people's lives are at stake?

If God answered every one of your prayers for the salvation of others this week, how many new believers would enter the kingdom?

Loved the testimonies last week of moms faithfully praying for salvation of their kids

They prayed as if their lives were at stake, because they were

Some of you husbands need to know that your wife is praying for you, as if your life depends on it – because it does

• I desperately want to be a church that never stops praying – in good times or bad
When we have need, and when we don't

I want constant, fervent prayer to mark us – individually *and* corporately

Not just a few of us, not just an elite prayer team, not just the staff – but all of us

Not just because God will answer, but a church that prays together, stays together

There's nothing like dedicated time in prayer, to unite us

Whether in SG's, Service Teams, WM, MM, SM, CM – wherever it is, time spent in prayer is unifying

Pray as men every Wed. morning from 6:15-7:15 – if you're a man, you're invited

Much of that time is spent listening and being quiet before God

Because prayer is less about what you say, and more about what you hear

Less about speaking and more about listening

Less about requests and more about worship

Less about you and more about him

Whatever it is, and wherever it is – Never stop praying; God *will* answer

He told them a parable that they ought always to pray, and secondly – not lose heart, as in

Never give up – God *will* act

Second reason for this parable

The widow of all people had reason to lose heart and give up, but she didn't

She persisted in seeking justice and relief – that was her issue

She persisted in doing the right thing, against all odds

You may be discouraged at times, but you should never give up

What are you facing these days that tests your resolve? That makes you want to give up?

Sticking with a difficult spouse; Persecution at work; Loving difficult people

Living right when everyone else is living wrong

Doing what you know is best, despite the opposition of a few

What ever it is – don't give up

Do the right thing; And keep doing it, even when things go wrong

Keep running the race in the strength that God provides

Keep fighting the fight with the power of the HS

Keep walking the walk near to the heart of Jesus . . .

Because God *will* intervene (read 7-8a)

God *will* deliver you when the time is right, and he *won't* delay long over you

When he does act, it will be swift and sure (8a)

Until then, never ever give up

Food for my soul these days – to keep doing what's right, even with opposition increasing

Like the opposition of having our sign vandalized with spray paint

Opposition of angry people in response to something I preach

Opposition of hard hearts when the truth of God's Word collides with closely held beliefs

As much as we are a bright and clear beacon of truth and hope, we're also a very easy, well-lit target for opposition

I love being an aroma of life to people, but hate being an aroma of death (2 Cor 2)

This parable and teaching re-fuels and re-strengthens me to never give up

If an unrighteous judge will act on behalf of a social outcast, how much more will a righteous God, our loving heavenly father, act on behalf of his children?

Never give up – God will act

He will do so in his time and his way; But he will do so

Never stop believing – Christ *will* come

It's the thought he leaves us with in v8 (read)

Remember – he's talking more and more at this point in his ministry about life, death, and his return

After reminding us that he *will* answer us when we pray . . .

And he *will* act when we persevere . . .

He basically asks the question – Will it do any good? Will it really make any diff?

Will I find your faith intact when I return?

Or will I find people who have forsaken me and made shipwreck of their faith?

People who claimed to follow me in their head, but not in their heart

People who added me to their philosophy of life, but failed to *surrender* their life

People who said they believed, but fell by wayside and stopped believing

That's what Jesus is getting at

Never stop believing – Christ *will* come

When he does, it will be the ultimate act of . . .

Vindication for those who suffer injustice

Rescue for those suffering oppression

Intervention for those enduring opposition

Salvation for those who long for his appearing

But his coming does you no good if you stop believing

Does you no good if you turn your back on Christ and go your own way

If you lose patience with him and resort to your own methods

- If he came today, what would he find *faith* in you?

Would he find belief? Trust?

Or would he find unbelief, doubt, and rejection?

If you're losing heart, tiring of the temptations that nag you . . .

Hang on – Christ *will* come

If the injustice of this world is starting to overwhelm you – natural disasters, man-made destruction . . . look to Jesus; He *will* come, making right all wrongs

If you're languishing/stalling out in your walk, wondering if there's light at the end of the tunnel . . . there is – the light of the world

1 Cor 11:26 – *As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

We're going to share communion together in a minute

As we do, let the memory of his first coming, increase your confidence in his second

He didn't fail us then, he won't fail us now

Never stop believing; Never stop praying; Never give up