

The Old Hickory

Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

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“He Preached Right at Me”

I have heard this statement made many times by individuals who have just heard a sermon presented which exposed some wrong in their lives. Did you ever wonder why anyone would feel that the preacher had "preached right at" him? Suppose the preacher has just preached against lying. Who in the audience will feel that he has preached right at him? It could only be one who is guilty of lying. The same would hold true on any other subject. What we need to do is examine the things taught in the light of God's word. If we find them to be true we should accept them. If they expose some wrong in our life we need to change and thank God that there is someone concerned enough about our soul to teach us what we need to hear.

- James Hahn

Sin Is Not a Smart Investment

Adam and Eve, for a bit of fruit when they were not even hungry, brought suffering, shame, and death upon themselves and us (Genesis 3).

Lot's wife, revealing her longing for the things that pertain to earth, took one last look back and became a pillar of salt (Genesis 19).

Achan, for a garment he could not wear, and for silver and gold he could not spend, paid all his possessions, family, and life (Joshua 7).

Samson, for the caress of a hypocritical woman, lost his will, his strength, his liberty, his eyes, and finally his life (Judges 15).

David, to enjoy another man's wife, handed to posterity a tale of adultery, shame, and tears (2 Samuel 11, 12).

Ahab, coveting a vineyard he'd never enjoy, permitted his wife to have its owner killed (2 Kings 23).

Judas, for thirty pieces of silver which he had no occasion or conscience to use, took his own life in shame and despair (Matthew 27).

Demas, loving the transient world more than a permanent future, forsook and provoked the wrath of heaven (2 Timothy 4).

A Christian who leaves Christ forfeits his ticket to heaven for joys that are only temporary (2 Peter 2:20-33; Hebrews 11:25).

- unknown

Don't Quit Praying!

“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart”(Luke 18:1)

Jesus knows us. He knows our weaknesses and tendencies. He knows our strengths and successes. A warning from the mouth of one who knows us so well should carry much weight. So what does Jesus warn us about in times when we “lose heart”? “Men ought always to pray and not lose heart”(Luke 18:1). Don't quit praying!

Jesus tells a parable to illustrate the principle (Luke 18:2-5). A widow requests justice from a judge, who for a while refuses to act. However, the widow's persistence finally leads him to avenge her “lest by her continual coming she weary me”(Luke 18:5). We must learn the lesson well from this determined widow: don't quit praying!

Don't quit praying because God hears! Often our discouragement stems from a feeling of inadequacy in our prayer: God hasn't helped me, and I'm not even sure my prayers go higher than the ceiling. Never forget that as long as we are living as we should (1 Pet 3:12), God hears our prayers! There is no question this judge heard the widow's request—the text says he simply “would not for a while”(v. 4) do what she asked. Further, when Jesus applies this parable to our prayers to God, He asks, “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?”. God always hears the cries and requests of His children! Though we may think God has forgotten about us when our prayers are not immediately answered the way we'd like, we must never lose heart! God speaks directly to such a mindset and says “men ought always to pray and not lose heart”(v. 1)! Don't quit praying; God hears!

Don't quit praying because God rewards persistence! What finally got the judge to act? “yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest

by her continual coming she weary me”(v. 5). The continual, persistent asking of this widow got her what she desired. Can the same be said of our prayers? Her persistence made this woman more powerful and influential than the greatest of men, whom the judge had no regard for (v. 2, 4). Making the application, Jesus speaks of the elect of God “who cry out day and night to Him”(v. 7), adding that as a result God “will avenge them speedily”(v. 8). An earlier parable of Jesus tells of a man going to his friend at midnight to ask for food, and only receiving it because of his continued asking. Of that man, Jesus says, “I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs”(Luke 11:8). Like the characters in these parables, God rewards persistence in prayer! Please understand that God is not saying that we can nag Him into giving us whatever our heart desires. Rather, when we genuinely need something and continually trust that He is the way to receive it, He is more likely to give it to us. If we ask for something from God once, then forget about it, do we really need it or truly trust He will provide it? Remember, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much”(James 5:16), but the occasional, haphazard prayer of a lukewarm man accomplishes little. Don’t quit praying! God rewards persistence!

Don’t quit praying because God desires faith! Isn’t it faith that buoys us through the times when we lose heart and strengthens us to keep looking to the Father? Despite the fact that our prayers might not be answered—or answered in a way we prefer—can we keep asking and trusting? Jesus, having told the parable, laments, “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”(Luke 18:8). Faith is God’s desire. When cancer has taken our loved one, can we pray that God will heal someone else with cancer, truly believing He can and will? When we have failed in temptation so many times, can we ask Him for help and forgiveness, truly believing we can overcome with His help? When life is hard, when money is tight, when people are angry, when we can’t see our way, do we trust and look to our God? “But without faith it is impossible to please Him”(Heb 11:6). God knows about all that life contains, but still desires us to trust Him! Take your problems to the Lord. “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you”(1 Pet 5:7). Whatever you do, don’t quit praying! God wants you to believe!

Remember that stubborn widow—a character Jesus used to illustrate our stubborn devotion and trust to God. A dogged determination to appeal to our Father will be rewarded. Jesus knows us better than anyone, and His prescription is more prayer. Don't lose heart! Don't quit praying!

- *Jacob Hudgins*

AN EXTRA PRAYER

*When the whole world falls down around you,
A prayer will see you through.*

Say an extra prayer for someone

Who may need it more than you.

For who knows what hearts are breaking

In the silence of the night?

Just that extra prayer you whisper

May help someone see the light.

Every time you help a stranger

With an extra prayer or two,

You are building secret blessings

That will come back to you.

- *unknown*

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Be Strong!*" (text: 2 Tim. 2:1-10);
Sunday evening: *Bi-monthly Singing!*

SCHEDULE: Our Fall Gospel Meeting is scheduled for Sept. 18-23, with Eric Reynolds.