

Watch and Pray (Luke 11:1–13)
By Pastor Jeff Alexander (9/9/2018)

Introduction

1. The hearings this week in preparation for the confirmation of Judge Brett Kavanaugh were disrupted repeatedly with many being arrested.
 - a. We might blame it on Trump-derangement syndrome but the rage at core of that syndrome comes from the same source that drives the Kavanaugh protest.
 - b. What we are witnessing is the frustration of spiritual forces under satanic control whose plans were interrupted by Trump's election. This is not just political jostling. We are in an all-out spiritual war for the domination of earth and the souls of men by the evil one.
 - c. This realization prompted me to think about what believers should do in this critical hour, and that is to *pray*—to watch and pray for God's will to be done and His name glorified.
2. The disciples were sleeping at the critical hour of Christ's humiliation in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus rebuked sleeping Peter: "*Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*" (Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38). Peter failed to heed Christ's warning, and, in spite of his strong protests to the contrary, Peter fell to temptation and denied the Lord.
 - a. Objections might arise that Christians should not be overly concerned with politics because the kingdom of God is superior and separated from any earthy governance.

On the contrary, our involvement in the affairs of the nation are both biblically supported and closely connected with the will of God (Colossians 4:2–4).
 - b. However, a *tension* must be kept in times of trial and tribulation so that we do not fall into despair. The tendency of the flesh is to respond in fear and desperation (2 Timothy 1:6, 7).

Watching and praying empowered by the Holy Spirit is God's way of advancing His purposes in recovering His kingdom and restoring righteousness in the earth.

I. The Mechanics of Prayer

1. The "Lord's Prayer" is recorded in Matthew 6 and Luke 11 but, I believe, was uttered on two different occasions and places (Matthew 6 was in Galilee; whereas Luke 11 was near Jerusalem).
 - a. The difference between these two occasions is primarily one of *emphasis*.
 - 1) Matthew 6 focuses on the *mechanics* of prayer (*how* to pray): (1) not praying to be seen of men, (2) nor as a means of parading spirituality before men, (3) nor treating the Heavenly Father as if He were ignorant of one's needs, and (4) in a positive vein the fact that praying coordinates human desires with God's sovereign purposes.
 - 2) Luke 11 focuses on *praying* as implied in the request, "*as John taught his disciples.*" We know *how* to pray; what we need is *to pray*.
 - b. In Luke 11 Jesus taught His disciples to recognize their status as that of a *beggar*, which the flesh hates.
2. The *glory* of God must be the goal of all our praying (vv. 1–4).
 - a. We must have a proper *motive*—the glory of God—for everything that we ask of God.
 - b. All Biblical promises support such praying (Ezekiel 36:23).

“*The holiness of [His] great name*” is profaned in American culture, and Ezekiel 36:23 gives us powerful support to pray that it will be vindicated. We have an enormous task that calls for determined perseverance.

II. Perseverance in Prayer

1. The story of the reluctant friend (vv. 5–8)
 - a. This story is troubling for three reasons:
 - 1) Begging, pleading, and nagging God seems inconsistent with what we know about God—His mercy, grace, kindness, generosity, and love.
 - 2) The story suggests that God is reluctant to answer prayer, requiring that we “put pressure on Him.”
 - 3) It also seems to be out of sync with the original proposition of the passage—that God’s glory is the goal of our praying. Why must we beg God for what hallows His name and advances His kingdom?
 - 4) We must understand this passage in light of Luke 18:1–7:
 - b. It was Jesus Himself who taught these things and put them together for us (Isaiah 62:6, 7). Jesus is teaching us the urgency of prevailing prayer until God’s goals are met. We must not rest until this is accomplished.
2. Christ defines *perseverance* as determination to arrive at the destination (vv. 9, 10).
 - a. Three things stress the importance of prevailing prayer:
 - 1) The present tense of the verbs emphasize *continuous* action—“*keep on asking. . . .*”
 - 2) The fact that Jesus commands this continuous action three times and repeats the three words in v. 10
 - 3) The three words used show the progress of one’s seeking an answer and pressing in on God: (1) Asking for directions to a destination; (2) Seeking the destination until found; (3) Knocking at the destination until the door is opened.
3. Christ teaches that *confidence* and *faith* must sustain our prayers (vv. 11–13). Prayer is confidence that God is willing and ready to grant to us that which we ask of Him in faith, even as we prevail upon God (Matthew 21:22; James 1:6).

Notice that it is the Holy Spirit who is given in answer to prayer (Romans 8:26).

What Can We Take Away?

1. To pray as Jesus prayed, our praying must have as its goal the glory of God and the furtherance of His kingdom. Everything we ask for must have that end as its driving force.
2. To pray as Jesus prayed assures us that as we enter the divine conflict as soldiers of the cross, we will prevail (Romans 8:37).
3. To pray as Jesus prayed enables us to walk in the Spirit as we live by the Spirit (Galatians 5:25). It is the Spirit of God that is bringing about the reconciliation of all things (Colossians 1:20). The Spirit makes Christ’s own the instruments or weapons for righteousness (Romans 6:13).

So, “*take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth*” (Isaiah 62:7).