

our partnership in the Gospel with the church in El Coyolar. As you know our hope is that these serve trips will be used by God to develop a “global partnership” with the community of El Coyolar. Later this year, in the fall, a group of adults plans to return to El Coyolar for service, worship, prayer and fellowship. We look forward to how God will use each of our communities to bring mutual blessing to each other and strengthen our local witness. Perhaps as our ties with a Spanish speaking community in Honduras is strengthened, God will increasingly open our fellowship in Burnaby to Spanish believers. We don’t know. We do know that they are partners in the Gospel with us, and for this reason we must pray for them.

PRAY: Pray for the community of El Coyolar. Pray that more youth and young adults in this village will come to know the Lord. Pray that the Christians in El Coyolar will be a powerful witness to their neighbouring villages. Pray that much fruit will come from the work and relationships of our serve team. Pray that God will continue to lead us in our relationship with the church in El Coyolar.

FRIDAY APRIL 1

Read: Luke 18:8

Jesus concludes this teaching on prayer with the promise that God will see to it that those who cry out to Him will get justice.

Though the Father is compared to this judge, it is clear from the passage that our Father as Judge is both Righteous and Loving. While this earthly judge did not fear God or care for men, our Heavenly Judge, is just and true in all he does, and loves His children.

How much more then, shall our Heavenly Judge, ensure that His loved ones receive justice! He will hear our persistent prayers, not because we are bothering Him, but because He loves us.

And if that’s true, then v.8 calls us to pray with expectancy. Sometimes that is hard for me. Sometimes as I pray for God to act, I relate to the man who met Jesus and said, “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief!” But Jesus calls us to pray with expectation; anticipating that God will answer our prayers even if His answers are different than what we might expect. Persistent, prevailing prayer only arises where there is faith. For this reason, in a teaching on prayer, Jesus concludes with a question about faith. Prayer flows out of faith; faith is built up through prayer. Little faith generates little prayer. Strong faith generates much prayer. I believe it is that simple.

PRAY: Pray that the Holy Spirit will fill you with faith-filled expectancy as you pray.

SATURDAY APRIL 2

Read: Luke 19:1-10 in preparation for tomorrow’s sermon.

Consider coming to morning prayer today in the sanctuary at 6:00AM.

WEEKLY DEVOTIONS GUIDE

MAR. 27-APR. 2, 2011

BY: PASTOR ANDREW BEUNK

NEW WEST CRC

SERIES: A 'TANGIBLE DISPLAY' PEOPLE: JOURNEYING WITH JESUS IN LUKE

SERMON: “THE URGENCY OF PRAYER FOR RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP”

LUKE 18: 1-8

DR. MICHAEL GOHEEN

SUNDAY MARCH 27

KEY THEME OR TAKE-AWAY:

MONDAY MARCH 28

Read: Luke 18:1; Gen. 32:22-28; Matthew 15:22-28

I remember there being a time in my life when I wondered if it was right, or necessary, to ask the same thing of God again and again. If God was omniscient then surely He would hear and remember my prayer the first time I prayed it and would not require me to bring the same request repeatedly. Besides, my thinking went, He is also sovereign and that meant He would know if, when, or how, my prayer should be answered. In fact, because of His sovereign plan for history, I even wondered if my simple requests were really even necessary. Have you ever thought this way?

This kind of thinking sort of takes us “off the hook,” so to speak, of really needing to persistently pray.

But then I read texts like the ones we read today, in a new light. Jacob persisted with God. Abraham persisted with God regarding the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The widow persisted with Jesus for her daughter. And Jesus tells us to pray and not give up. Jesus tells us to keep coming to God persistently with our requests.

Al Vandergrind has written that “God is sovereignly determined to move in response to our prayers.” And if that is true, and I believe that it is, then no wonder Jesus says we must not give up. God’s sovereign plan for our lives, for our congregation, our community, our world, is intricately tied to our prayers. That puts our persistent praying in a whole new light.

PRAY: Pray that God’s Spirit will fill you with boldness and persistence as you pray.

TUESDAY MARCH 29

Read: Luke 17: 20-37

We have just read the passage that comes right before our text for this week. In this passage we read of the day of the Son of Man’s coming. Some parts of this passage are difficult to understand. What we do sense however, is that the Son of Man’s coming will come suddenly and without warning. There is a mystery to the timing of God’s Kingdom. We cannot simply say, “Look, there is the Kingdom” or “Here it is.” Jesus says the Kingdom does not come with careful observation. The Kingdom, says Jesus, is “within you” or “among you.”

Our text in ch.18 also ends with a reference to the coming of the Son of Man. Luke seems to tie together our passage from ch. 18 with these verses in ch. 17.

We are to pray and never give up, because our prayers—for healing, for justice, for godliness, for peace—are the means through which God chooses to advance His Kingdom. In prayer we seek to align our lives with the life of the Kingdom—which is within us. Through prayer God’s King-

dom is manifest in us and through us. Through prayer we call upon the gracious and righteous Judge who loves us and will grant us justice, whether in this life or the next.

We must pray and not give up because as we pray our faith is exercised and strengthened, and our lives increasingly look and long for the coming of the Son of Man.

PRAY: Pray that God will strengthen your faith through prayer.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 30

Read: Psalm 34:8-14

Psalm 34 invites us to trust God completely. He loves us, he knows us, he provides for us. I think all Christians believe this, but we don’t always experience this or feel it.

Philip Yancey in his book on Prayer writes, “If prayer stands as the place where God and human beings meet, then I must learn about prayer. Most of my struggles in the Christian life circle around the same two themes: why God doesn’t act the way we want God to, and why I don’t act the way God wants me to. Prayer is the precise point where those themes converge.”

Yes, God loves us and cares for us, but He doesn’t always act in the ways we might want. Nor do we act in ways God wants. That means at least two things happen as we pray: first, we submit our lives and our wills to God; and second, we allow Him to change us. As we pray we submit ourselves to a God we sometimes don’t understand, and we open ourselves to be changed by this God so, increasingly, He is able to work through us.

Submission and dependence. Humanly speaking, it is very hard for me to submit and hard for me to depend on others.

Another reason I suppose, why Jesus commands us to always pray and not give up.

PRAY: Pray prayers of submission to God and of dependence upon Him.

THURSDAY MARCH 31

Read: Philippians 1: 3-6

Today the Honduras team returns. We have prayed for them and continue to pray for their safe return, and for a trip that was blessed by God. Undoubtedly, during the next number of weeks we will hear many stories of how God revealed Himself during their time in Honduras.

Today we are invited to spend an extended time in prayer using the verses from Philippians as our guide. In these verses Paul prays for the Philippian believers. Let us use these verses to pray for our Honduran brothers and sisters.

Paul writes to the Philippian church and gives thanks for their “partnership” in the Gospel. In the same way, we ought to give thanks for