Faith-Prayer

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Preacher: Matt Huckins

[0:00] We're going to be reading Luke chapter 18 and just the first 17 verses this morning, so not the whole chapter. Luke chapter 18.

We have three short little stories making up this and they'll make up our points for the passage or for the sermon this morning. But follow along with me as we read.
And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man.
And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, Give me justice against my adversary. For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.
And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect who cried to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?
[1:13] I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and they treated others with contempt.

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. And the Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.
I fast twice a week, and I give tithes of all that I get. But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.
I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.
Now they were bringing even infants to him, that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called to them, saying, Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them.
[2:33] For to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

Sorry, I was standing up front this morning, and my wife and the rest of the kids come in, and I heard my two-year-old.
This wasn't planned. Juliet, she said, Daddy, because she saw me up here. And that was like, it was such a cool feeling.
And then I turn around, and in that moment, I'm singing these songs about God, and I'm floored. Because just like that connection that Juliet felt towards me, her daddy, I got to feel about God, and how he loves us.
Today we're talking about prayer, and it's such an important thing. If Juliet and I had never talked, we never spoke, we had no relationship, what would that mean? So when we sang that God is a good, good father, and Lord, I need you, and it's not about me, it's about him.
[3:53] It was just hard to sing. I'm just crying because God is so good, and I'm just a sinner. But we do have a message.

That was just an introduction. Sorry, Brian, that wasn't in my manuscript. But God works that way.
In our passage this morning, God is teaching us that prayer is important to our faith.
It's so cool when God works that way, when he wants us to get a hold of something. Sometimes he just keeps pushing in until we get it. And so I'm thankful that we have a God like that.
But he teaches us that prayer is important for our faith, our relationship with him. So how is your prayer life?

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I'm going to ask you that this morning, and just pause for a minute. I'm going to pause for a minute, and you just think about it. You don't have to blurt out answers. I just want you to think about how would you characterize your prayer life?
[5:16] How would you characterize your faith in God? I'm sure here this morning there's a few people who don't pray.

I'm sure there's some people here that you're, for one reason or another, you're here but you don't believe in God, or you're learning, you're seeing, you're testing the waters of the Bible and who Jesus is.
And I'm just glad that you're here this morning. But my prayer is that by the end of this passage from the Word of God, your faith in God might be stronger.
It might be changed in a way that will have effects on what your prayer life is. And if you're a Christian and you believe in God and you know who Jesus Christ is and what He did for you, and your prayer life is still non-existent, I pray that after this message you will be encouraged to change that because of its importance to your faith.
So in our passage this morning we're going to be looking at three characteristics that Jesus gives us related to prayer and faith. Three things that should define our prayer-faith life.
[6:43] I say prayer-faith because these two things, although they're different, they're very much connected together. Verse 1 in our passage, chapter 18, verse 1, and He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

So right from the beginning we get this connection of praying and not losing heart or a person's faith. Here we see Luke does something a little different in this parable.
In the beginning he tells us right up front the reason for the parable. Parables are given by Jesus to teach us something. We know this, and Luke here tells us what it is right from the beginning.
He says He told a parable to the effect that, to teach them that, they ought always to pray and not lose heart. Now from the end of chapter 17, that we heard about last week and the week before, we know that Jesus is talking to His disciples.
So why is He telling them that they should always pray and not lose heart? Well, as you remember from last week especially, Sean talked about how Jesus is returning.
[8:07] He's going to be returning. It'll be visible like lightning. You're not going to miss it. But no one knows when that's happening except for God Himself. So it's going to be a while.

And what happens when something takes a while? We don't know when it's happening. We're kind of hoping in it. And life continues to go on. If we don't have a focus, if we don't have a purpose, then we're going to lose heart.
And so the other reason Luke is saying this is because he wants us to make this connection between faith and prayer.
And we're also going to see this connection made even stronger at the end of this passage in verse 8. We'll look at that in a minute. But we need to understand that relationship between prayer and faith because it's crucial to the framework of our Christian life.
That is, if our Christian life is like a house that's built up and made stronger and over time more usable for God, then we must realize that the connection between prayer and faith is needed to make that happen.
[9:19] There's a role there that has to take place in order for those things to work. First, we should always pray and not lose heart. And then if we jump down to verse 8, when Jesus comes back, will he find faith on earth?

So we have always pray and don't lose heart. And will he find faith? And what I'm going to argue this morning is that those two things we can't separate.
They go together. If there's no prayer, then faith becomes obsolete. See, prayer is faith's main activity.
If your faith life is strong, your prayer life is strong. Strong prayer makes for strong faith. No prayer makes for no faith.
So this morning, as we look at a Christian's prayer, faith, life, we're going to be looking at three characteristics. And the first one is taken from the parable.
[10:42] Excuse me. In the first eight verses. I'm going to reread this section just because I think it's helpful. And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

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And he, this is Jesus, said, In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, Give me justice against my adversary.
For a while he refused. But afterward he said to himself, Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.
And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?
I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? So there are two characters in this parable.
[11:51] First is a judge. And the passage says that he did not fear God. That is, he was not a believer. He did not trust in who God was. And secondly is he did not respect man.

Basically, he didn't really care what people thought. He wasn't one who looked up more to a prominent person versus, in this case, a widow.
The judge in this parable is not Jewish. We know that because Jews, when they had a dispute, they would bring them in front of Jewish elders.
They wouldn't bring them to the public court. So this judge here would have been appointed by Romans. And Roman judges were known for their corruption.
So the more clout, the more money that you have, the more speedily and better a verdict will be for you. So when we're talking about a widow, you can imagine that speed and a good verdict isn't really on her side.
[12:53] We see that the judge refuses for a while to give any relief to the widow. But then he changes his mind. It says in verse 5, It's interesting that the words there, so that she will not beat me down, can actually be translated a couple different ways.

One is, the obvious is, she exhausts me by continually coming. So before she does that, I'm going to go ahead and give her what she wants. It can also mean that she's going to eventually give me a black eye if I don't give her what she wants.
So the judge is, in either case, wants to save face, if you will, by giving her what she needs. Then in verse 6, And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge says.
And will not God give justice to his elect who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. See, in this parable, Jesus is not saying that God is like an unrighteous judge.
This parable is not one of similarities, but rather a lesser versus greater. If the lesser thing is true, then how much more will the greater thing be?
[14:29] If a slow-to-respond, earthly, unrighteous judge will finally answer this widow's request, then how much more will our all-knowing, loving, righteous, Heavenly Father answer the pleas of his elect?

And who are his elect? Take a look at verse 7. Those who cry to him day and night. Those who cry out to God day and night are those who have faith in God.
You're not going to cry out to him day and night for relief if there's not a faith in who God is. Jesus is not teaching, also through this parable, that if we ask God enough, that we'll get whatever we want. God is for us. He knows what is best, but he also knows what's harmful for us, even if we don't know about that harm ahead of time. So to that end, he will answer our prayers.
Thanks, man. You got it. We all know, if we can remember far enough back, that kids ask for a lot of things.
[15:55] Christmas time, obviously, but other times, you go into stores, they see things, they want things. One thing that...

Sorry, my pages are sticking here. One thing our kids...
It wasn't things, it was more freedom. One thing that our kids wanted to do once they learned how to walk was they wanted to do it on their own, especially if we pull into Walmart parking lot or we pull into the mall, we get out of the car, it's freedom time.
Daddy, mommy, let me walk. I don't want to hold your hand, just let me walk. Now, we know there's a couple problems. The first problem is they might not be that good at walking, so you know if you hold their hand, and you can keep them from falling and skinning a knee.

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The bigger issue is they have no idea of the death, the injury that can happen because of cars. Cars aren't looking for little kids, and little kids have no concept of what could happen to them.
[17:10] And so early on, we just grab their hand, as much as they hate it, and we walk to the store. Or we have this hand-or-hold philosophy.

That is, if you want to walk, you'll take my hand. If you don't, I'm going to hold you. That's usually worse because it's no freedom at all, right? But there's safety. And Cheryl and I know that our responsibility is to get them to that door safely.
And so if it means I'm holding your hand, if it means I'm holding you close, I'm taking you there, and you're going to make it. And that's what God is to us. We want that freedom, but we don't see the death, the destruction, the heartache, the pain that comes from that.
God sees that, so His answer might be no when we don't understand. But you can know that God answers those requests because He loves you, not because He wants to control you and keep you held back.
Thank you. He wants to give us good things. James 5.13 says, If anyone among you is in trouble, let them pray.
[18:25] Psalms, or Proverbs 15.8, The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases Him. 1 Peter 5.7, Casting all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you.

He wants to give us good things. He wants to hear about our requests, and He wants to satisfy those requests because He cares for His children. By children, I mean those who are Christians, right?
Those people who realize that we are sinners and we cannot save ourselves. In God's eyes, we're like children. So when I say that to you this morning, I'm not putting anybody down by calling you a children.
But if you're a child of God, then you're a children. You're a child that God loves. He loves you, and He needs us to act like children in order for that to work.
We can't be His child and then live the way that we want. But He loves you, and He loves me, and He provided a way of salvation through Jesus Christ, His Son.
[19:39] So we repent of our sins. We believe in what Jesus did for us, and we can be a child of God. If you haven't done that, you can be a child of God as well by doing that same thing.

Jesus Christ came here, lived a perfect life, so He could die on a cross to cover the sins that we committed because Almighty Holy God required sins to be covered and paid for.
Since we couldn't do that, He sent His perfect Son to do it for us. And so if we believe in Jesus and what He did for us, we repent of those sins, then we're able to be children of God.
It's that easy. But if we try to go around it and do it a different way, then we're our own God. We're circumventing what God put in place through His Son for us, and we're telling Him, that's nice, but I got a better way.
I think this way will work. Back to the parable. We know that God cares for His children.
[20:56] If you remember back when we were in chapter 12, Jesus was telling us not to be anxious about food and clothes, the necessities of life. He says, how much more value are you than birds?

How much more, talking about the grass, how much more do I clothe you than the grass who passes away tomorrow? In Deuteronomy, chapter 32, verse 10.
Now this is Old Testament, before Jesus was born. So it was back when God had chosen the Israelites as His people. Moses wrote this, He, God, found them, the Israelites, in a desert land, in the howling waste of the wilderness, and He encircled them, He cared for them, and He kept them as the apple of His eye.
So we get this picture from the beginning of God choosing a people for Himself and loving them, protecting them, and bringing them in. God cares for His own.
And He wants us to pray to Him, and He wants to give us everything that is good for us. And like I said, it's not everything. Some things are harmful for us. But God knows what will help.
[22:17] God knows what will make us stronger. Verse 8, it says, I tell you, He will give justice to them speedily. From our perspective, when we pray, things don't seem to happen speedily.

If we're honest, right? Sometimes they seem like they take forever. It may seem like God is too late, or maybe He's not listening at all.

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But hear me, and this is where verse 1 and verse 8 are so important for us to hold on to. God's people are to pray and not lose heart.
Persistent prayer like the widow was persistent with the judge. So when Jesus comes back, will He find those with faith on the earth?
Will those who say that they are Christians be found praying? Praying for anything? Salvation for loved ones? Healness from a disease?
[23:24] Prayer for getting through rough days? Will He find His children praying for anything? Will there be faith? Or will they have lost heart?

Galatians 6, 9 says, Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.
How do we keep from losing heart? Through prayer and faith. John 16, 33, Jesus says, In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, because I've overcome the world.
So if you grab on to those truths, those promises that we get from God, and you pray, and you continue in your faith, even through difficult times, because you know God is with you, has it, and will never leave you, then you will remain strong in your faith until the end.
Our prayer life, by direct connection, our faith life, then should be continual. I know that was a little long getting to the first point, but continual is one of the aspects that we want for our prayer and for our faith life.
[24:46] The widow persisted in her coming to the judge, and Jesus encourages us to continue also. Verse 1 says that we ought always to pray and not lose heart.

Our requests, our struggles, our needs, they're ongoing. So while this parable only showed the widow having one request, our requests don't end, do they?
Life doesn't end. Our struggles don't end. Our prayers should not end. Not this side of heaven. We can't do it alone.
We can't do it in our strength. It's not possible, and it's not how God designed it. So do you deal with the struggles of life yourself, or do you take those to God in prayer?
Do you battle sin and temptation using your own strength, or do you pray to God for a godly, supernatural strength that only He provides?
[25:46] We are told that we ought always to pray. Thessalonians 5.17 says, pray without ceasing. Our prayer needs to be continual.

Now, when I say that, we're not talking about praying nonstop, right? Continuing through time and space without ever ceasing prayer. We do have things in life that we do.
We're talking about continual prayer in the way that it is recurring frequently, and especially at regular intervals. I didn't have an example of this until this morning.
It's funny how God brings these out, but recently we got a puppy. Cute little Australian shepherd. He likes to eat.
He loves food. He's started small, and he's getting bigger. But his... I can say that he eats all the time because he eats three meals a day.
[26:58] He has little puppy treats quite often, and he licks up whatever food is dropped from the table, which at times can be plenty.

So I can say that he continually eats or that he's always eating when really it's on regular intervals. Morning and lunch and dinner he eats. Occasionally when he does something good, he gets a treat. And when he digs in, like he sees the food falling onto the floor, he goes after it.
What if our prayer life was like that? What if we could say that our prayer life was continual? Because at regular times in a day or throughout the week, we know we're praying.
The puppy needs food in the morning when he gets up. Before we go to our work, we need prayer. Come on, you guys know we need prayer.
[27:57] We can't do this on our own. What if our prayer life was that way? If it was continual, so much that it was on a schedule. And when we needed it, we prayed more.

When it was made available for us, we took the opportunity, if we could, and we prayed more. Because we need it. Because it's what, it's the strength for our faith.
faith. Jesus wants us to be continual in our prayers so that our faith remains strong. Let's take a look at our next passage, our next parable, starting at verse 9.
He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt. Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax

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collector.
The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.
[29:05] I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I give, of all that I get. But the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breath, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

And I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.
Like the first parable, this one starts out by giving us the point. It is aimed for those who trust in their own righteousness, their own good deeds to save them.
We depend on ourself, and we start this mindset that we don't need God. And everything starts to be done for our glory. Our salvation starts to be based on things that we do.
And after that, we start comparing ourselves to others, because I do all these things, and you don't. Because I live this way, and you don't. Well, I am more righteous.
[30:15] God loves me more. Thank you that I'm not like this guy. Thank you. So the second characteristic we're going to look at this morning in our prayer of faith life is to be contrite, that is, humble and repentant, to show remorse for sin or for our shortcoming before God.

Like in the first parable, there are two people. One is a Pharisee, one's a tax collector.
The Pharisee boasting of his own accomplishments, while the tax collector is confessing his sin and asking God for mercy. That's what we should be like with our prayer.
The first prayer, if you want to call it that, was from the Pharisee.
Wasn't even two full verses, and he's got it packed with five I's. I thank you that I am not like other men.
[31:30] I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get. He's praying with himself. Right?

He's bragging of his own righteousness, of his own accomplishments. This isn't prayer to God. This isn't anything humbling or confessing. He's just telling God how good he is.
Now we compare that to the posture and the prayer of the tax collector in verse 13. He stands far off. He would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast.
His posture is one of humble unworthiness. That's where we are. Before God, before an almighty, perfect, sovereign God, we're just filthy sinners.
Sometimes that's hard to say, but that's where we are. We're just filthy sinners. And so we come before him knowing who and what we are.
[32:35] Not bragging as if we're worth something. See, salvation happens when we repent of our sins and put our trust in Jesus.

Again, knowing that we couldn't do it. It took God to send his perfect son to make that even possible because we're creatures made by God and we're sinners and he's holy and we're not.
And there's this chasm like what Sean talked about the other week. There's this fixed chasm that's there between us and God. And there's no way it crossed except for through the cross of Christ.
Any other way that we try to fix that chasm and we fall short? We look again at the prayer of the tax collector in verse 13.
It says, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. That's the humility we want in our prayer life, in our stance before God. Like we sang, we do come boldly to the throne of God, but we boldly come humbly knowing who we are and who God is.
[34:09] That's what it means to be contrite. Not looking down at other people, not boasting, not judging, not despising other people, not making excuses, just humbly bowing our hearts before God and asking for forgiveness.

Isaiah 66, 2 says, All these things my hand has made, so all these things came to be, declares the Lord.
But this is the one to whom I look, he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.
We look to Jesus and what he did and we say, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.
We repent. We get it right. That's how we fix the relationship between us and God because I don't have to tell you, if we're honest with each other, we sin all the time.
Even when we don't think we sin, we sin. And before a God who has no sin and is holy, we're way more sinful than we think we are.

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[35:25] So we approach God that way. If we take a look at Jesus' response in verse 14, it's quite surprising.

At least it was to the Pharisee and to other religious people who were standing around listening to this parable. See, Jesus justifies the tax collector. That's not what they expected.
They expected that the good and pious and the one who does everything like the Pharisee. They expected him to be made righteous and justified.
But that's not what Jesus said. Jesus instead justifies the tax collector. That is, God grants the tax collector, the sinner who comes humbly, he grants him forgiveness and he counts him as righteous.
You know what that means? That means the sins that he has done. God takes the righteousness of Jesus and puts him in view in front of this sinful tax collector.
[36:39] So that when he sees the tax collector, he sees the holiness and the righteousness of his son, Jesus. And he does that for each and every one of us.

that's why the belief and the faith in Jesus Christ is important because it's the perfect holiness of Jesus, the perfect righteousness that Jesus has that God sees us as.
If we stand out from behind Jesus because we think we're good enough, suddenly God doesn't see a perfect holy son, he sees a tarnished, sinful person who can't get it right because we're his creatures, because we're sin, because we have a nature that has fallen.
And so we repent and we get back behind Jesus and his righteousness and things are right again between us and God because we get to go through Jesus and his righteousness.
So the last part of that in verse 14, for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled.
[38:07] The Pharisee was humbled because he came exalted. He brought himself high and puffed up, but he was humbled because Jesus didn't justify him.

And the tax collector who came humbly, Jesus exalted him and counted his righteousness. How do you approach God?
Do you come humbly before him, acknowledging who you are? Do you expect to be justified based on the works that you've done? The only justifying work that truly counts is the work that was done by Jesus Christ on the cross 2,000 years ago.
So if you bring some other work, it isn't holy, it isn't righteous, and it will leave you humbled. So we're going to look at the last portion of our passages this morning.
and it's a, it isn't a parable like the first two, but rather it's, it's a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples. From it, we will see the need for our prayer faith life to be childlike.
[39:29] And that's our third characteristic that we're looking at. There should be an aspect to our prayer faith life that is like a child.

Last two verses of this section, verses 15 through 17. Now they were bringing even infants to him, him Jesus, that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them.
But Jesus called to him, saying, let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.
It was customary at this time, kind of is in certain ways now, for parents to bring their infants or their children to a prominent rabbi for a blessing.
And that's what we see happening here. Children are being brought to Jesus so that Jesus can bless them. His thoughts to them were very different from other leaders.
[40:38] See, at this time, children were looked on as a bother mainly because, well, they can't help much. They just get in their way. They require more work than they can put out.

Right? So it wasn't until a child was older and they could contribute more to the day-to-day life of their family where they were looked on more as a person. But that's not how Jesus looked at them.
Children, here even infants, were being brought to him so that he could touch them. That is, he's put his hands on them, maybe pray for them, tell him that he loves them and that they're cared for.
How loving and encouraging is that? For the parents, but also for the child, if you think about it.
They may not remember it then, if they remember it later in life or it's told to them what takes place, what encouragement that would be.
Jesus Christ was here on earth. He's on his way to the cross, but he takes time to put his hand on me and say, you're special.
[41:52] God loves you. Before they've done anything, they're an infant. God loves you. That's the kind of love that Jesus is showing.

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Now, as the children are coming, we see the disciples are stepping in and they're like, oh, back up. Now, it could be that they were just acting insensitive and not wanting to be bothered with kids. That's true. I don't think that's the case because they know at this point how Jesus feels towards people and especially children. So I think what probably is taking place is the disciples have in their mind Jesus is starting to become burdened and stressed internally.
He's on his way to Jerusalem where something big is happening. We know it was the crucifixion. They don't get it yet. They just know something's happening. So in order to care for Jesus and help protect Jesus, they want to pull away any extra stress that could be on him.
I think of like a father who comes home from a stressed day at work. Something bad happened or he's just overly tired and one of his kids runs in and just wants to talk to daddy and hug on daddy and mom or the other kids, hey, back up.
[43:17] Dad's had a tough day. Just give him a few minutes. And that could be what the disciples are doing here. Hey, just give Jesus some space. He's talking, doesn't really have time for the kids.

That could have been their thought. I'm going to go with that because it's a good thought to have towards the disciples. But Jesus didn't feel that way. He says, no, no, no, don't stop them.
I want them to come to me. Verse 16, let the children come to me. Don't hinder them. For to such belongs the kingdom of God. Now, he wasn't saying that the kingdom of God belonged to children, because he clarifies that in verse 17.
Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. In order to have faith to receive salvation, or he says the kingdom of God, God, one needs to be like a child.
What does that mean, be like a child? Be small? Think small? There are many aspects of that childlikeness we could talk about, but really there's just one main one we're going to look at today, and that is a child's natural tendency to trust and not worry about things.
[44:42] Right? If you remember growing up, unless something bad happens early on, a child's natural tendency to trust their parents to take care of them is there.

You didn't question when you were three years old, where's my food coming from? You might want to know what you're eating, but you never question that it's going to be there. Right? If you went to some place, an amusement park, or anything like that, you never questioned how you were going to get in, your parents were going to take care of you.
You may have been nervous or scared at some time, but you knew that your parents were there and you could trust in that. That's that childlike faith and trust that Jesus is talking about.
So that third characteristic is childlikeness. There should be an aspect of our faith that is childlike. That is, I can't do it, God.
You can do it. You got me. And if God calls us to something, then we ought to know he's going to give us what we need for that. Not think that we have to come up with it on our own.
[45:55] So it's that childlike faith. I don't know how this is happening, God, but I trust you. You got me. So I'm walking. I don't know how this is going to work, but I'm walking because my God has got me.

like a child through the parking lot when they don't even know the dangers. God's got me. Be childlike in your faith.
Don't rest in your own faith to get you there. Let things go because God has them. Amen. Amen. Amen. I realize that with an audience this large, there could be a few people here that didn't grow up with that foundational example of trust.
Maybe you didn't have parents. Maybe you had bad parents. But I want you to know this, that God can be, if you let him, that perfect loving father that you didn't have.
Maybe you had one, but he gave you a bad example of one. Don't push God away because you're holding on to a bad example of fatherhood or motherhood or lack of trust.
[47:26] Romans 8.15 says, You have received the spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

2 Corinthians 6.18 I will be a father to you. You shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.
So when Jesus talks about receiving the kingdom of God like a child, he's talking about having childlike faith and trust. We come to him with total faith, with total trust, knowing he is always in control and he loves us.

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He knows what is best for us. We aren't in control. We don't come trusting ourselves. Because when we do, then we don't need Jesus.
We don't need God anymore in our lives. God is teaching us to be continual in our prayer and our faith, to be contrite and humble before God and to have a faith that's childlike.
[49:00] So before we end, I just want to go back and ask our original question. How would you characterize your prayer life? How would you characterize your faith in God?

Do you pray at all? Well, I believe in God. I have a lot going on. I'm pretty busy. I don't pray.
But I believe in God. So I'm good. Really? You have a relationship with God and you don't pray? Do you have a wife or a girlfriend and you don't talk to them?
Tell me what your relationship is like with them. I don't think I would call it a relationship. So do you pray to the God that you have faith in?
Or you just hold on to that because it feels nice and religious? I believe in God. The demons believe in God. It's got to be deeper than belief in God.
[50:08] There's got to be a prayer, a trust in God that the demons don't have or we're not any different. And the demons are going hopefully to a different place than we're going.

I don't want to go where they're going. So do you pray? Now I know we're going to struggle because life gets busy.
But fight for your relationship with God because your faith in God depends on it. You can't tell me that you have a good relationship with your boss if you never talk to your boss.
You have a good relationship with your kids but you never talk to them. You never interact. You never talk about needs or wants, how life's going.
There's no prayer. How can there be faith? How can there be a relationship? So my encouragement for you this morning is how is your prayer life?
[51:17] How can we fix that? prayer? Yes, I realize some of it is a discipline. We have to discipline ourselves to pray. But it's a relationship with Almighty God that's made available for you.

And if we don't pray, then we can't expect to have faith in very much from God because it doesn't work that way. Prayer is the fuel that our faith needs in order to grow, in order to grow and remain strong.
Our faith needs our prayers, brothers and sisters. So what does your prayer life look like? Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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