**Extreme Prayer**

**Even the Prayer of an Unrighteous Man Can Availeth Much**

Extreme Prayer Series

The Book: *Draw the Circle* by Mark Batterson, National Community Church, Washington DC.

A 40-day prayer challenge: pray daily, circling the prayers we believe the Lord has revealed to us to be fulfilled

 For ourselves (holiness, transformation, finances, relationships, use of gifts)

 For others in need that we can become advocates for

 For breakthroughs of problems in our life that we are certain the Lord wants to solve,

overcome

Why pray together?

 Jurisdictions of authority

 Self / family / church / workplace / community

 The more ambitious the spiritual goals (New Life, Alexander County revival):

 We face more demons and more principalities

 We need a bigger army

This is the last week of the sermon series. You can still start the devotional. 25 books are available

**Even the Prayer of an Unrighteous Man Can Availeth Much**

James 5:16

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Three Points

 1. We all can pray

 2. We cannot afford *not* to pray

 3. Our prayers help create the future

We are given responsibilities and assignments:

 Family, friends, school, work, friends, community

When we accept a responsibility, we enter a Contract / Covenant

Responsibility / Respond-ability

“With great power comes great responsibility.” (Spider-Man Comic quote)

With great responsibility *can come* great power to meet the challenges.

Phil 4:13

I have strength for anything through Him who gives me power. (Weymouth)

**Even the Prayer of an Unrighteous Man Can Availeth Much**

The Lord is asking us to care for, nurture, and fight for these responsibilities and assignments

Many of us undertake our responsibilities completely in our own power:

Forgetting to bring the resources of God to bear on the difficult situations by prayer

 Taking on hell with a water pistol

 Not bring the “rivers of living water” of the Holy Spirit with us

There is a cost to praying

But there is a much greater cost to not praying

My favorite responsibility: Grandkids!

Three Points

 1. I can and do pray

 2. I cannot afford *not* to pray

 3. My prayers help create my grandkids’ future

Are God-assigned, man-accepted, covenant-established responsibilities being done well as a

rule? Look around.

 Broken contracts, divorce, unfaithfulness, child abandonment, child abuse, violence, theft,

swindling, poverty, strife, division

Should God-assigned, covenant-established responsibilities be faithfully carried out?

Eccl. 5:4

When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it, because He takes no pleasure in fools. Fulfill your vow.

Rom. 1:20

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So, they are without excuse.

Who are “*they?”*

II Cor. 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

We know; we try.

But we need help.

Help is on the way *(if we ask for it)*

We have the Holy Spirit. We have prayer. Our spirits are in union with His Spirit (I Cor. 6:17)

But…many of us have a Prayer Inferiority Complex

Our heroes of the Bible, and in church history are all not “supermen.”

They are flawed and unrighteous apart from Christ, just like us

 Noah; Abraham; Jacob; Moses; Gideon; David; Solomon; Elijah; Peter

The prayers of the men and women of the Bible, and in church history, were heard despite

their sins and ungodliness

How can the prayer of an unrighteous man availeth much?

The prayer of a trusting, yet imperfect man, is heard

Trust is required; then usually followed by redemption, and growth in holiness.

No shirt or shoes required

An example of a relatively unrighteous man in the Bible whose prayers and vows availed

much: Jacob:

Jacob’s life:

Gen. 25:25-28

When (Rebecca’s) time came to give birth, there were indeed twins in her womb. The first one came out red, covered with hair like a fur coat; so, they named him Esau. After this, his brother came out grasping Esau’s heel; so, he was named Jacob…

When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home. Because Isaac had a taste for wild game, he loved Esau; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Jacob “tries” to become the first born at birth

Jacob take’s Esau birthright for a bowl of soup

Jacob tricks Isaac into blessing him, not Esau: stealing Esau’s blessing in addition to birth-right

Jacob himself gets tricked by his uncle Laban; having to marry Leah then Rachel; getting taken advantage of for his labor for 20 years.

Jacob is unkind to Leah; plays favorites with his sons; curses some of his sons.

Jacob was not a “saint.”

 Yet his prayers, vows, and prophecies changed the course of history

Jacob’s Dreams and Prayers

Gen. 28:12ff

And Jacob had a dream about a ladder that rested on the earth with its top reaching up to heaven, and God’s angels were going up and down the ladder. And there at the top the LORD was standing and saying, “I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac…When Jacob woke up, he thought, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was unaware of it.”And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven!...”Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and watch over me on this journey, and if He will provide me with food to eat and clothes to wear, so that I may return safely to my father’s house, then the LORD will be my God.

Gen 32:25-28

So, Jacob was left all alone, and there a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that He could not overpower Jacob, He struck the socket of Jacob’s hip and dislocated it as they wrestled. Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men, and you have prevailed.”

Even the prayer of an unrighteous man can availeth much

Three Points

 1. Jacob prayed

 2. Jacob could not afford *not* to pray

 3. Jacob’s prayers help create the future

Jacob’s legacy:

The prophesies of Genesis 48-49

Jacob declares that Ephraim and Manasseh (Joseph’s sons) will get first generation inheritance

Jacob curses Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Dan

Jacob blesses Judah and the other sons

The consequence?

 Reuben, Simeon, Levi are passed over for first-born inheritance

 Dan is not mentioned in Revelation 7 (the 144,000): he is replaced by Manasseh

Manasseh, Ephraim, and Judah received the best land in the Promised Land

The entire Old Testament history:

The securing of the coming of the Messiah through the kings of Judah (and not the first

three-born)

The future of the world; us sitting here

Predicted, influenced, established, and “created” by Jacob’s prophetic prayer

Prophecy:

 Future-telling

 Astrologist, palm readers, fortune tellers

 Old Testament prophets: Jesus predictions

 New Testament prophesy

 Future- forming

 Creating positive l*egacies*

The Descendants of Jonathan Edwards (18th century First Great Awakening preacher):

1 U.S. Vice-President

1 Dean of a law school

1 dean of a medical school

3 U.S. Senators

3 governors

3 mayors

13 college presidents

30 judges

60 doctors

65 professors

75 Military officers

80 public office holders

100 lawyers

100 clergymen

Mark Batterson’s example of positive and negative prophetic words:

I grew up in an alcoholic household where I never heard a positive word. On my way home from school I would always stop in at Jimmy’s the local dry cleaner, because he kept candy on the counter. He got to know me, and told me one afternoon, “Michael, you are a very smart boy. Someday you are going to run a very big business.”

I would listen to him in disbelief and return home only to get called a “dog” and knocked around by my dad. But you know…Jimmy the dry cleaner was the only person I can remember believing in me…Today I run a multimillion-dollar health care organization, just like Jimmy predicted. I guess you could say that a dry cleaner was the prophet in my life.

Our responsibility to those under our authority and influence:

 To train and nurture them

 To bless, not curse or criticize them

I Cor. 4:2

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful

Matt. 25:23

‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

Good stewardship includes:

 1. Praying with trust, faith, hope

 2. Not *not* praying

 3. Blessing those we are responsible for; creating legacy; a positive future

Three Points

 1. We all can pray

 2. We cannot afford *not* to pray

 3. Our prayers help create the future

Need a book? 25 available
 Invitation to join us Wednesday night 6:30

 Or follow us online on New Life’s Facebook page

 <https://www.facebook.com/NLChurchNC/>

Invitation

 Ask for the Lord’s help with stepping up to a responsibility

 Ask for the Lord’s help for renewed praying and trust in prayer

 Ask for the Lord’s help to bless those we are responsible for and create positive legacies