Teaching Notes

*The Circle Maker* by Mark Batterson

Chapter 4

For January 27, 2013 Zadok Orchestra Lifegroup

1. Intro
	1. Pray.
	2. Discuss handouts:
		1. Did we read the “Sonship vs. Orphan Spirit” handout from last week? Thoughts?
		2. [“Do You Have Big Fierceness?” handout](http://www.fromhispresence.com/2012/12/08/do-you-have-big-fierceness/) (word study of ‘makrothumia’)
	3. Discuss homework from last week.
		1. How do you define success for yourself personally?
		2. How would you define success for us as an orchestra?
	4. Today we are going to cover chapter 4 of *The Circle Maker.*
2. Teaching

A. Review:

* + 1. God is with us.
		2. He loves us.
		3. He’s for us.
		4. So we can and must pray boldly, and we can expect answers.
		5. In order to get those answers, we must clearly define what we are praying for.
		6. And to obtain a God’s-eye view of what to pray for, we need to get alone with God.

B. Chapter 4 is about “praying through.”

* + 1. Tell story of Mother Dabney in Philadelphia. <http://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/556-charisma-channels/prayer/3018-?tmpl=component&print=1&layout=default&page>=
		2. It’s always too soon to stop praying.
			1. Jericho: What would have happened if they had only circled the city for 6 days?
			2. Naaman the leper: What would have happened if he had only washed in the Jordan 6 times?
			3. The apostles: What would have happened if they had given up and stopped praying for the Holy Spirit on the day before Pentecost?
			4. What will happen to you if you stop praying the day before your miracle was scheduled to come?
			5. There’s no shortage of promises on God’s end. Any shortage is on our end. But even if we pray and don’t seem to get answers, we must pray on.

If we push and push against a 500-pound rock, it may not move, but you will get stronger.

Prayer is like that. You cannot pray without it changing you.

Even when you pray and don’t seem to get answers, God still answers—even if not in a way we expect.

* + 1. Spurgeon, “Pray Without Ceasing,” March 10, 1872: *“Never give up praying, not even though Satan should suggest to you that it is in vain for you to cry unto God. Pray in his teeth; "pray without ceasing." If for awhile the heavens are as brass and your prayer only echoes in thunder above your head, pray on; if month after month your prayer appears to have miscarried, and no reply has been vouchsafed to you, yet still continue to draw nigh unto the Lord. Do not abandon the mercy-seat for any reason whatever. If it be a good thing that you have been asking for, and you are sure it is according to the divine will, if the vision tarry wait for it, pray, weep, entreat, wrestle, agonise till you get that which you are praying for. If your heart be cold in prayer, do not restrain prayer until your heart warms, but pray your soul unto heat by the help of the everblessed Spirit who helpeth our infirmities. If the iron be hot then hammer it, and if it be cold hammer it till you heat it. Never cease prayer for any sort of reason or argument. …Never, never, never renounce the habit of prayer, or your confidence in its power.”* <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/1039.htm>

C. True prayer is interceding until God intervenes.

* + 1. **Luke 18:1-6:** *“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,****2****saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.****3****Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’****4****And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man,****5****yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’”* ***6****Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said.****7****And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He* ***bears long*** *with them?****8****I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”*
			1. The word for “bear long” in the Greek is makrothumeo /mak-roth-oo-MEH-o/, which is related to “makrothumia” (big fierceness and endurance). It means to be of a long spirit, not to lose heart; to have big fierceness (Strong’s Greek 3114, 3115, 3116).
			2. God may seem to be ignoring us, or taking His time to answer. But He’s really not. He’s rooting for us, bearing with us with a fierce spirit.
		2. Illustration: Matthew 15:21-29: *Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon.****22****And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.”* ***23****But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.”* ***24****But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* ***25****Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”* ***26****But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.”* ***27****And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”* ***28****Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.* ***29****Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there.”*
			1. (From [Damon Thompson](http://damonthompsonministries.net/) sermon, Women’s Ramp, 2011): Imagine this picture. Jesus only does what He sees the Father doing, and only says what He hears the Father saying. So He went to Tyre and Sidon for a specific purpose that He got from the Father. Meeting this woman is the only purpose recorded in this passage.
			2. (From [Damon Thompson](http://damonthompsonministries.net/) sermon, Women’s Ramp, 2011): Yet when He gets there and she starts to pray and ask Him to heal her daughter, first He ignores her. She keeps begging and the disciples get annoyed.
			3. Then Jesus actually rejects her. She continues to persist in prayer.
			4. (From [Damon Thompson](http://damonthompsonministries.net/) sermon, Women’s Ramp, 2011): Then He insults her. He calls her a dog. But she won’t be swayed. She is willing to take whatever she has to take, but she knows He has got to heal her daughter.
			5. (From [Damon Thompson](http://damonthompsonministries.net/) sermon, Women’s Ramp, 2011): You can see Jesus walking and hearing her, and ignoring her on purpose. But each time you see Him ignoring her cries, you can also see Him saying to Himself, “Come on, lady!” He walks farther and she continues to cry. He continues to ignore her but say to Himself, “Come on, lady!” Finally He insults her but still you can hear Him saying, “Come on!” And when she refuses to be put off even by the worst insult, He says, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it unto you according to your desire.”
		3. God is saying the same thing to us. He’s saying, “Come on!” But will you push through? Will you persist even if you feel like you are being ignored, rejected, and insulted? Will you persist in prayer even if you feel like **people** are ignoring, rejecting, or insulting you? Will God find faith in your heart?
		4. Even though God may bear long with you without seeming to answer, He will surely avenge you, His elect.

D. Praise

* + 1. Joshua 6:1-2: *“Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in.****2****And the Lord said to Joshua: “See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.”*
		2. The Lord said that He had given Jericho to Joshua IN THE PAST TENSE. It was already done. Joshua just had to obey and receive it.
		3. Our works are also already prepared for us.
		4. Ephesians 2:10: *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*
		5. Hebrews 4:3: *“For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: “So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.””*
		6. The works are prepared, but we have to receive them. So after we pray and pray through, there comes a point when we just need to start praising God for answering our prayer.
		7. If you have prayed and prayed and still haven’t seen the answer, just start praising God and thanking Him for the answered thing when you pray.
		8. We can’t buy God or manipulate Him into acting. But we can build our own faith and remind Him of His own promises. Reminding God of His promises is pleasing to Him and builds our faith.

III. Application & Discussion:

1. Can you think of a time when you’ve been tempted to give up praying for something, and then God suddenly broke through?
2. Any additional prayer cards to add to album?
3. Give album to someone else to take home this week. Ask them to covenant to pray for each card at least once.