Teaching Notes

*The Circle Maker* by Mark Batterson

Chapter 8

For February 24, 2013 Zadok Orchestra Lifegroup

1. Intro
   1. Pray
   2. Today we are going to skip chapter 7 (so Michael can teach it) and start on chapter 8 of *The Circle Maker.*
2. Intro to Chapter 8: “Persistence Quotient.”
   1. Assign Scriptures for various people to read:
      1. Luke 18:1-8
      2. Luke 11:1
      3. Romans 8:26-27
      4. Isaiah 9:6-7
      5. 1 Corinthians 2:14
      6. Song of Solomon 8:6
      7. Matthew 11:1-6
   2. Review: Luke 18: 1-8
      1. The story of the persistent widow and the unrighteous judge.
      2. Remind everyone that “though He bear long” is derived from the Greek word makrothumia; God is rooting for you with big fierceness.
      3. He will surely answer your prayer, but we have to keep praying until He does.
   3. We have to work like it depends on us but pray like it depends on God.
      1. Batterson: “Desperate times call for desperate measures, and there is no more desperate act than praying hard” (Circle Maker, 82).
      2. Holy desperation will do what it takes to get answers. Holy desperation will get up early or stay up late. Holy desperation will skip meals and grab onto the feet of Jesus instead. Holy desperation will drive you to take radical steps of faith.
         1. ‎"The gospel moves with slow and timid pace when the saints are not at their prayers early and late and long." -E.M. Bounds, "Power Through Prayer"
      3. **There was no quit in the persistent widow, and the Judge knew it. But “Does *The Judge* know that about you?” (Circle Maker, 82)**
3. Success is derived from persistence.
   1. Persistence in prayer is a habit to be cultivated. It’s something we have to learn.
      1. What if Elijah had stopped praying for rain on Mount Carmel after 6 times? “He would have defaulted on the promise and forfeited the miracle” (Circle Maker, 87).
      2. Batterson: “It’s easy to give up on dreams, give up on miracles, give up on promises. We lose heart, lose patience, lose faith. … Is there some dream that God wants to resurrect? Is there some promise you need to reclaim? Is there some miracle you need to start believing for again?” (Circle Maker, 87)
         1. Close your eyes. Think of something you used to want that you stopped believing God for. Something that never came, so you gave up on it.
         2. Maybe God wants to resurrect that miracle.
         3. My personal examples: Healing in my eyes; preaching; being a stay-at-home mom.
   2. It’s interesting that Jesus never taught on unanswered prayer. Why? Because unanswered prayer wasn’t part of the equation.
      1. So why do we stop praying? Batterson says that “The reason many of us give up too soon is that we feel like we have failed if God doesn’t answer our prayer” (Circle Maker, 87).
      2. Tell story of Bethel Healing Rooms preacher who prayed for a sick person to be healed, and they died. Then he was afraid to pray for anyone after that, thinking they might die if he prayed for them! But he did it anyway and then God started healing people he prayed for.
      3. When we pray, it’s like moving that 500-pound rock that we talked about a few weeks ago. We may not move the big one right away, but after we pray awhile, all of a sudden we can move the 200-pound rock right next to it.
      4. Prayer changes US.
   3. We’ve got to stop getting offended at God.
      1. **Matthew 11:1-6**: *“Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.””*
      2. John the Baptist had prayed and sown his entire life into the coming of the Messiah. But when Jesus’ coming didn’t look like John wanted it to look—when things were going slower than John wanted—John got discouraged and was ready to quit.
      3. Jesus reminded John of all the signs (referring back to Isaiah 61) that proved Jesus was the Messiah. Then Jesus said, “Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”
4. Practical application: How do we get there?
   1. Personal story: When I got saved, I could not pray. I didn’t know how to pray, but the problem was deeper than that. I literally had no capacity for prayer. I didn’t like prayer and my attention span wouldn’t tolerate it. Same with Bible study: I couldn’t read more than one or two verses each morning. I couldn’t tolerate it. So I asked God to do five key things:
      1. **Teach me to pray.** 
         1. **Luke 11:1.** *“Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.””*
      2. **Help me pray, pray through me, and intercede for me.** 
         1. **Romans 8:26-27.** *“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us**with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”*
         2. **Finney**: “Let it never be forgotten that no Christian ever prays aright, unless led by the Spirit. He has natural power to pray, and so far as the will of God is revealed, is able to do it; but he never does, unless the Spirit of God influences him; just as sinners are able to repent, but never do, unless influenced by the Spirit” (Power, Passion, and Prayer, page 141).
      3. **Increase my capacity for prayer and for the Word.** 
         1. **Isaiah 9:6-7:** *“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* ***Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end****, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”*
         2. The Kingdom of God always increases.
      4. **Open Your Word up to me.** 
         1. **1 Corinthians 2:14**: *“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*
         2. The illuminating power of the Holy Spirit: God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.
      5. **Sear Your Word into my heart like a brand.** 
         1. **Song of Solomon 8:6**: *“Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame.”*
         2. When I pray this, I can see the red-hot cattle brand of God’s Word. I can smell the smoke and hear the sizzle as I imagine Him searing His Word into my heart. And He answers this prayer and helps me to remember what I read and learn.
   2. I prayed these things continually, every morning, every day, every time I thought about the Lord. Every time I sat down to pray or open my Bible. And little by little, He answered these prayers. If you pray these things, He will answer. We need Him to do this work in our hearts whether we are seasoned prayer warriors or fledgling pray-ers. It doesn’t matter; no prayer is possible without the Holy Spirit.
   3. The last thing about learning to pray is the most important. It’s learning what to say. Batterson says: “One of the primary reasons we don’t pray through is because we run out of things to say. Our lack of persistence is really a lack of conversation pieces” (Circle Maker, 94).
   4. **The solution to this: The Bible isn’t meant to be just read through. It’s meant to be *prayed through. Pray the Word!***
   5. God’s Word is our vocabulary for prayer. If prayer was a song, the Word would be the scale. Pray God’s Word back to Him.
   6. What God said to Reinhard Bonnke: “My Word in your mouth is just as powerful as My Word in My mouth.”
5. Conclusion
   1. We’ve got to get in the habit of prayer.
      1. John Welch, “minister of Scotland [b. 1570 – 1600s] thought the day was ill-spent if he did not spend 8 or 10 hours in prayer” (Bounds, Power Through Prayer, 46).
      2. Historians say that the Apostle James, after killed, was found to have calloused knees like a camel’s from praying so much.
      3. John Wesley prayed 2 hours a day (Power Through Prayer, 44).
      4. Martin Luther, 3 hours a day (Power Through Prayer, 45).
      5. The apostles gave themselves to fasting, and prayer, and the study of the Word.
      6. Jesus Himself often spent all night in prayer. Jesus was God. If God Himself, in order to do the work He was called to do, must pass all night in prayer, how much less should we give ourselves to the Lord in prayer?

"Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the Kingdom of heaven on earth. God does nothing but in answer to prayer." -John Wesley

**Housekeeping:**

1. Any additional prayer requests to add to album?

2. Give album to someone else to take home this week. Ask them to covenant to pray for each card at least once.