

Luke 18:1-7; Gal. 6:6-10; Growing Weary as Christians I. Weary in Prayer II. Weary in doing Good

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, when do people tend to get weary? What causes people to get tired- to say it too hard- to give up and throw in the towel? When do we tend towards sin instead of sanctity? When you are tired or hungry- that is when it is easiest to fall right? I had a friend that just finished a marathon and she said that at mile 20 you hit a wall- with only 6 miles to go your body tells you that it is finished. Well, the Christian life is like a marathon. Although salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ is free- sovereignly given to you as a gift- that does not mean that our life will be easy and free from hardship! No- quite the contrary- we find that this life is a battle- that the work we are called to takes great endurance. Today we are going to look at one word- that word is “ekkakeo” in the Greek- meaning to grow faint. We find this word in two main contexts in the NT- the first time we find this word it is found in Luke 18:1- do not grow weary in your prayers. The second time we find this word it is found in Gal. 6:9- do not grow weary in doing good. As we saw last week, there is a delay in time that passes- Jesus does not return right away. It is during this delay that the church must not grow weary or tired! So today we are focussing on the temptation to grow weary in these two tasks- in prayer and in doing good. We will look at this theme: Jesus Christ encourages us to not grow weary in our Christian living.

I. Weary in Prayer

In our reading from Luke 18:1, we find that we are to beware growing weary in our prayers -or to lose heart in our petitions we bring to God. To grow weary in prayer is to give up- to grow faint- to become exhausted so that you stop. For example, weariness in prayer means that our prayers are thoughtless- without depth and without thanksgiving. If we are too tired, we may simply ignore the call to prayer. Or we repeat ourselves- and we give little consideration to the needs of others. Weariness creeps in over time- as we pray for what we can see while ignoring what is not seen. Or we ask for something that we do not immediately receive. We can pray for our neighbors and the outreach of the church- we can lift up those who are outside of Christ for a time- but when we see little change we can be tempted to give up or stop. Where once we were filled with vigor- now we only pray because we are supposed to. Here is a helpful little test you can give yourself- make a list of everything you have

prayed for this past week. If God would give you everything that you asked for- would our communities be any different? Would the benefit of these answered prayers be evident only in healthy kids and a stable job- personal blessings- or would the world be a changed place? This test is a helpful way to remind ourselves to be diligent in praying for others as well. This entire parable is told in Luke 18 as an aid to help us who are often wearied in our prayers. Now the opposite of weariness in prayer is where Jesus starts in v. 1. These disciples are to always pray- to not give up when it comes to crying out for justice! Right at the beginning of this parable, Jesus tells us the point. This is not His normal practice, and if Jesus tells you what the point and application is right away- we had better pay attention! We are told that we should pray always- praying at all times and in every situation. Your life is a living prayer- where you are talking and walking with God every step of the way. As I Thes. 5:17 puts it, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. In order to encourage us- to help us when tempted to be weary- Jesus gives us a promise in v. 7. There is a promised result- something to look forward to- when we do not grow weary and give up. Encouragement to consistent prayer is drawn from the character of our God! Will not God give justice to His elect? Will He delay long over them? I tell you; He will give them justice speedily! Our God is delighted to both hear and answer our prayers! Because we know our God is good and loving, we can pray for all that He commands us to pray for- asking with the confidence of faith because we know that He will hear and does delight to answer us! Added to this promise, we know that our prayers are not alone. We have been given the Holy Spirit who prays within us- and we have Jesus Himself who is praying for us! In this way, our prayers are made perfect and what is necessary for our good and God's glory is secured. In prayer we are not left alone- and this fact should stir us on to renewed persistence in our prayers. Would we as parents turn a deaf ear to one of our children? Surely our loving Father will answer His children whom He has chosen and for whom His Son has died! So do not grow weary in your prayers- but rather persevere!

II. Weary in doing Good

So prayer is the first task to which we are called which is hard- but we are to endure- running the race until we reach the finish line. The next place where we find the word- to lose heart or grow weary- is in our text from Gal. 6:9. Do not grow weary in doing good. Do not grow faint or tired- do not give up on this holy task of good fruit. We are called in v. 10 to do good to all- and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Now why would anyone grow tired in this task? What obstacles do we face that might discourage us from persevering in doing good to all? Well, we face both enemies without and enemies within. There are enemies in this world that do not want us to be missional and evangelical. They want the church to be little more than a social club- because there is no real threat when we are only concerned about our own. Weariness can also come because of our own weakness. We are sometimes our own enemy- as our own flesh grows faint! Our bodies grow tired and our minds distracted. It is easier to sit on the couch than it is to actively pursue our calling. We think- all I do is give and give- serve and serve- but to what ends? I am worn out like a pair of old shoes. I can't go another mile- I won't give or budge from this spot. I am retired from the fight- my body can't take it. So we grow weary in doing good. All we do is give- and the people we give to are so unthankful. We also are tempted towards discouragement when we do not see results right away. After all we have done- I don't see anything changing. All the programs and outreach our church has tried- all the witnessing I have done- all the sacrificial service- and for what? Although we don't like to think that we are pragmatic- the fact is we can tend to be pragmatic about church programs and outreach. We can easily think- it has not worked in the past- so why try it again. No one has come to our church because of something that we have hosted- so why keep these programs going- or why try something new? Nothing else has worked. Not to mention how hard it has become to find volunteers. We tend to see ourselves as being alone. Everyone is so busy with their kids or their school or their work- that simply finding a time to do anything has become impossible.

Instead of growing weary and tired, Jesus tells us to persevere and continue to do good- sharing with those in need and sowing towards the Spirit. Be faithful in your charity- supporting the Christian church and ministries in proportion to your ability. Bring in your tithes and offering- and seek opportunity to use your gifts to be a

blessing to others. Share all good things with your teachers, bear one another's burdens, and let your light shine before men. As elders we talked about this a few weeks back- that as a church we are committed to doing good to others- to support those in need- even if they never come to our church. To view those in need as fellow image bearers- they are worthy of respect and care because of the God who made them whose image they reflect. It is understandable that God's people do grow weary from time to time- I have seen how much some of you have giving- what you have already sacrificed! Elders get bogged down; Teachers get tired- even Pastors can feel like they are not up to the job set before them. Parents grow weary of the constant service that children require. But here Jesus encourages us- and some times Jesus even uses others to encourage us. I know that there are some in this congregation that faithfully write letters of encouragement- others pray consistently for those in need- while others go out of their way to do good to all as much as they have opportunity. These are works of mercy that encourages others to not grow weary! But Jesus has a promise for us in v. 9 as well- a promise that guards against discouragement. Do not give up- for in due season you will reap! There is a promise of a harvest that will be had- when you sow to the Spirit you will reap a spiritual yield. Your good works are actually good for your soul- you will have a harvest of joy and holiness. And your good works are good for others- outreach and evangelism will produce a change in other over time. Now you may not see it- and others may not even be gathered into our local church- but Jesus promises a harvest! Now remember- a harvest takes time! Just last week Caleb planted a pumpkin seed in my garden- and the next day he asked where the plant was. Sorry- but seeds take time to grow. No one harvests what was just planted. But we have the promise of growth and increase- within us and within others. As Paul said in I Cor. 3:6, I planted and another watered- but God added the increase! So do not grow weary- a harvest is coming! Your labor in the Lord is not in vain- so do not give up!

To conclude, weariness is a constant temptation within the church. We grow tired of doing what we are called to do- because we do not see the results right away! But as II Thes. 3:13 says, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good! Jesus Christ encourages us to not grow weary in our Christian living. Prayers will be answered, and good works will produce a harvest in God's time! So don't give up! He is faithful, and He will do it!