

TITLE: "3 Prayers God will NEVER Answer"

TEXT: Hebrews 13:8 - "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

Introduction – 3 Prayers God will never answer

I found this in *Reader's Digest* 7/00 p. 132 "Prayer"):

Bob was crossing the highway one winter night when his foot became wedged in a pot hole. He looked up and saw a huge truck barreling toward him and realized that he didn't have time to unlace his boot. Panicking, he prayed, "Please, Lord, get my foot out and I'll stop drinking."

His foot still remained stuck, so as he struggled, he said, "God PLEASE help me. If you do, I'll stop drinking AND swearing!" Still nothing.

"As the truck approached, he cried, "I'm BEGGING you Lord, let me live and I will give up drinking, swearing AND I'll go to church every Sunday!"

Suddenly, his foot slipped free and Bob lunged to safety just as the truck thundered past.

"Whew!" said Bob. "Thanks anyway God, I took care of it myself."

God answers our prayers. God answers them in 3 ways.

Sometimes the NO's are hard to take.

Sometimes the YES's wind up, eventually, to be hard to take.

Usually the WAITS, especially when they drag on, are the toughest.

This morning I will be talking about 3 prayers that God will NEVER answer with a yes. You can pray with all your might, you can fast, you can get your family and friends to pray, you can get our church and churches all around the WORLD to pray that God will answer these 3 prayers with a YES ...and God will STILL answer them with a NO.

1. God will NEVER say YES to this prayer: "God, please don't change me."

I was in my office a while ago. Suddenly the door burst open and a lady I barely knew came in, walked up to my desk and said, "Do you know what crazy is?" ...I couldn't think how to answer her either rationally, or charitably, so I said, "Ahhh, No."

She said, "Craziness is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." She stayed and talked for a while and then left, but I'll never forget what she said because it was one of the most profound statements I have ever heard.

For one thing, it made me realize that I must be crazy. ...I know I need to lose weight. I DECIDE to lose weight. I keep eating the things I WANT to eat and then I am actually surprised when I weigh myself and find that I weigh either the same, or MORE! If you want different results in your life, you have to CHANGE.

A senior citizen was driving on Route 81 when his cell phone rang. He answered and his wife said, "Herman, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on Route 81. Please be careful! ..." "Hey," he said, "it's not just ONE car. There's HUNDREDS of them."

You don't want to change. I don't want to change. But we HAVE to change. Why? Because AMERICA is changing:

Jobs used to be secure. They aren't anymore.

The price of homes, cars and clothes used to be reasonable. They aren't anymore.

Older children sometimes DON'T move from home or they do and they still need support.

Elderly people often need help from their children.

In the distant past, most people had medical insurance. Not anymore.

Taxes USED to be reasonable., Vacations USED to be affordable, Gasoline didn't USED to be a luxury item.

Many people want to either go BACK to the way things USED to be or go FORWARD to a new and better place, and they are SCRAMBLING around trying, trying, trying, to get some SEMBLANCE of order and control in their lives. ...Not going to happen. Why? Because there is only one thing that never changesand that is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the one, and the only One, who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

And Jesus says, "Seek FIRST the kingdom of God and GOD'S righteousness and all the things you need will be added to you as well." You have to CHANGE to seek the kingdom of God FIRST in your life.

CHANGE your schedule and come to church, pray and read the Bible.

CHANGE your priorities and get involved in our ministry and mission programs.

CHANGE your finances and support our church and help the poor and needy.

It is only when you make these changes that you will find the love, joy and peace that you seek.

2. God will NEVER say YES to this prayer: “God, please don’t change the world.”

I don’t particularly LIKE a LOT of things going on in the world.

I don’t like terrorists blowing up innocent people.

I don’t like conflict in the Middle East.

I don’t like oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico.

I don’t floods in Pakistan.

I don’t like hungry children here in Dryden.

There is probably no one here who WOULD pray, “God, please don’t change the world.” That’s good because God IS going to change the world for the BETTER. AndGod is going to YOU to do it.

Earlier this summer I was helping out at the Kitchen Cupboard. A lady drove up in her van. She has 5 kids and lives in a tumble-down house. That day, her two youngest and 5 other children 10 and under boiled out of the van. One who knew me said, “Guess what, guess WHAT? ...She’s taking us to a CARNIVAL!!!” This was obviously the highpoint of this little girl’s summer.

When I asked her who these kids were, she said they were just kids she takes care of when their parents can’t. I know once a couple went to a family funeral and in another state and if she hadn’t taken their two children, they would have been home alone for a couple weeks. ...At the end of almost every month, this lady runs out of food. If you support our church or the Kitchen Cupboard, YOU feed those poor kids.

Anyway, these kids were telling me about the carnival and one little girl said, “My sister can’t go because she doesn’t have a shirt to wear.” ...I got some plastic bags and handed them to the three little girls and said, “Go over to the shed there and pick out some clothes.”

One said, “We don’t have any money.”

I said, “The clothes are free.”

She said, “Free clothes? FREE clothes?”

And she and her two friends bolted for the clothing shed. ...In a while they came back and showed me what they had picked up. Most were clothes for adults, but hey, they were better than what they were wearing and certainly better than nothing. The little girl said, “And I found a shirt for my sister so now SHE can go too!”

THANK YOU for giving clothes to the clothing shed.

THANK YOU for giving to the WEB program.

THANK YOU for giving to mission programs that help needy people around the world.

THANK YOU for supporting our church that makes all of this possible.

God IS changing the world for the better and I thank you for helping in that process.

3. God will NEVER say YES to this prayer: “God, please don’t change my church.”

In the book *Personal Selling Power*, author Ken Blanchard writes about change. One of the things he says is this: “People can handle only so much change. Beyond a few changes, or even one or two, if significant, people become immobilized.” ...That’s what is happening today. There are SO many changes in our world, our jobs, our expenses, our communities, that we have become immobilized. We realize we can NOT stop MOST change, so we tend to want at least SOME things to stay the same. ...Things like our church.

But our church ISN’T staying the same. Things ARE changing. Let me read you a story:

A United States Marine, who had completed missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, was attending some college courses between assignments. One of the courses had a professor who was an avowed atheist. ...One day the professor looked to the ceiling and flatly stated, GOD if you are real then I want you to knock me off this platform. I'll give you exactly 15 min. The lecture room fell silent. You could hear a pin drop. Several minutes went by and the professor proclaimed, 'Here I am GOD, I'm still waiting.'

Suddenly, a Marine got out of his chair, went up to the professor, and cold-cocked him; knocking him off the platform. The professor was out cold. The Marine went back to his seat and sat there, silently.

The other students were shocked and stunned, and sat there looking on in silence. The professor eventually came to, noticeably shaken, looked at the Marine and asked, 'What in the world is the matter with you? 'Why did you do that?'

The Marine calmly replied, 'GOD was too busy today protecting America 's soldiers who are protecting your right to say stupid stuff and act like an idiot. So He sent me.'

God has NOT, hopefully, called any of you to sock a professor, or a pastor, but God HAS called you to be part of the evolving, changing, ministry and mission of our church. HOW are we changing?

Our youth group is doing new and exciting things (Undy Sundy, Jeopardy)

The glass hallway is being renovated by volunteers.

The Weekend Backpack Program is expanding.

We host a VERY active Mothers of Preschoolers Program.

We begin services with worship led by lay leaders.

Plus we have committed people serving as: elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers, choir members, Kitchen Cupboard staff, PW, Church finance, the Nominating committee, etc.

This morning, I want to say THANK YOU. And the LORD wants to say THANK YOU to each and every person involved in the ministry and mission of our church.

God is using us to make this a better church;

To make this a better community and

To make this a better world.

Conclusion –

I want to close with a poem. It is from the book Prarie Wisdom-Reflections on Life in the Dakotas by Bishop Michael Coyner. (Filed under “Change.”)

The wind blows, the world changes, the way is uncertain.

And God says, “Keep moving, for you are a Pilgrim People.”

We pray for security,

But God terrifies us with freedom.

We pray for a temple that stands,

But God gives us tents that move.

We want easy answers,

But God gives us cries of others in need.

We want conclusions,

But God gives us beginnings.

The wind blows, the world changes, and the way is uncertain.
Is there nothing that endures?

Only the steadfast love of the One who created the universe
and sustains us in love.

Is there nothing that endures? ...Only the steadfast love of Jesus Christ who is the
same yesterday, today and forever and who sustains us in love.

Amen.