

“But... when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, there was a young high school teacher named Alyssa. She wanted to, so much, succeed as a teacher. **BUT**, a student by the name of Eric was turning her into a nervous wreck and her classroom into a three-ring circus.

One morning, before school began, Alyssa was sitting at her classroom desk writing something in shorthand. Suddenly, Eric appeared at her door.

“What are you writing?” he asked as he approached her desk.

“I’m writing a prayer to God,” she said.

“Can God read shorthand?” he sneeringly joked.

“He can do anything,” Alyssa said, **“even answer this prayer.”**

Then she tucked the prayer inside her bible and turned to write on the blackboard. As she did, Eric slipped the prayer from her bible into one of his books.

Twenty years later, Eric was going through a box of his belongings that his mother had stored in her attic. Coming across one of his old books, he began thumbing through it. Lo & behold, he found that shorthand-prayer. It was yellow and faded with age.

Eric stared at the jottings on the paper and wondered, anew, what they said. He took the prayer and put it in his wallet. When he got to his office the next morning, he gave the paper to his secretary to decipher. She read it and blushed.

“It’s rather personal,” she said. **“I’ll type it out & place it on your desk before I leave tonight.”**

That night, Eric read the 20-year-old prayer. It said:

“Dear God, don’t let me fail in this job. I can’t handle my class with Eric in it. Touch his heart. He is someone who can become either... very good ... or... very... evil.”

That final sentence hit Eric like a hammer. Only hours before, he was contemplating making a decision that would commit him to a life of evil. He took the note and put it back in his wallet.

During the next week, Eric took the prayer out several times and read it.

To make a long story short, that prayer caused Eric to change his mind about doing what he was contemplating.

A few weeks later, Eric located his old teacher, Ms. Alyssa, and told her how her prayer had changed his life.

I share that true story with you because it brings us to **two points about prayer** that we find in today’s Scripture readings.

What, exactly, are those two points found in today’s Scriptures, you ask.

Well, I’m glad you asked that question!

1st, prayer has enormous power.

2nd, to experience that power, we must persevere in praying.

I will now look, briefly, at both points.

1st, prayer has enormous power. It can influence the outcome of events and it can change the lives of people. Commenting on this enormous power, Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Alex Carrel says:

**“Prayer is the most powerful form of energy that one can generate.
The influence of prayer on the human mind and body is as evident as secreting glands.
Prayer is a force, though invisible, that is as real as gravity, equally invisible.”**

2nd, to experience the power of prayer, we must **persevere** in prayer.

For example: today's first reading shows Moses **persevering** in prayer. Please note that when Moses grew tired, he **persevered** in prayer because **he got help** from his friends, Aaron & Hur, who held up his arms in prayer when he could no longer do so by himself! (WHY WE OPT TO HOLD ARMS UP AT the OUR ER.)

Once upon a time, a high school student told his teacher that he was able to **persevere in prayer** because **he got help** from his mother. They agreed to get up each morning at the same time and pray, privately, for 15 minutes in their respective rooms. Then, after eating breakfast together, she went to work and he went to school.

The boy said it helped him greatly to know that, while he was praying in his room ...his mother was also praying in her room.

Besides persevering in a period of prayer, as Moses did, we must persevere from day to day and from week to week, as the widow did in Jesus' parable this morning.

To do this, it helps to have a regular time to pray, as the teen and his mother did. Commenting on regular, scheduled prayer, in his book, **“Hungry for God,”** Ralph Martin says:

**“A real estate man I know gets up early in the morning to pray;
an aerospace engineer prays and reads scripture on his lunch break;
a production manager of a computing firm prays after his children are in bed at night.”**

I believe that the demands of modern life are such that, unless we actually **schedule** a regular time to pray, we probably won't pray at all! Keep in mind that, when something becomes important to us, **we schedule it** right into our daily life. We don't leave it to chance!

For example: if we want to deepen a friendship, **we schedule times and places** to meet with that person. We don't leave such things to chance!

The same is true if we want to deepen our friendship/relationship with God. **We schedule times & places** to meet him in prayer. Can't leave such things to chance! Otherwise, the relationship stagnates.

Any important relationship needs time to 'BE.' Time to BE...nurtured. Time to BE...lived. Time to BE...enjoyed. This certainly applies to spouses ...especially when they have children!

An important point to be noted about prayer is that we should not expect immediate results. This is clear from our opening story about Ms. Alyssa and Eric. God responds to prayer in his own time and way! Sometimes, God's time may be years later and, sometimes, God's way may be far different from what we expected.

So-o—if we are to experience the power of prayer, we must **persevere**, not only during a particular period of prayer, as Moses did, but also from day to day & week to week, as the widow did.

I now close with this reflection on prayer:

**I pray because I am a Christian; and to do what a Christian must do, I need help.
I pray because there is confusion in my life; and to do what is right, I need light.
I pray because I make decisions; but the choices are not always clear, so I need guidance.
I pray because I have doubts; and, to keep growing in my faith, I need help.
I pray because most of what I have has been given to me, so I ought to give thanks.
I pray because Jesus prayed to his father, and, if he considered it important, so should I!**

May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.