

THE BIG IDEA: Sometimes prayer leads us to a no, but faith will always take us through a no.

The Take-Off

Have you ever thought about what it means to go all in?

It's a phrase that we throw around a lot, we watch poker players push chips to the middle of the table and hear the announcers say, "She's going all in!"

When that happens, we may lean in a little closer to see the outcome, because someone going all in tends to draw us all in, doesn't it?

But why?

I believe it's because we know that it's all or nothing. It's a moment that can make or break us. A moment that can define us.

When we go all in, we're saying that we're convinced. That we're fully committed no matter the outcome.

It's risky, it's messy, but it is a powerful statement to everyone around us that we are fully committed in spite of the mess or the obstacles we may face.

And there will be obstacles, because that's the only way to reveal that we're actually all in.

The only thing to really prove we're all in is having the opportunity to go all out ... but still staying in.

[ILL / Brownsville Revival and shaking]

In Luke 18, there are 6 sections and each of them carry that weight of the all in moment, and all of the lead to the greatest all in moment in history.

(More about that on Easter Sunday)

Each section talks about a specific dynamic or quality or aspect of the Kingdom of God that we can and should go all in on, and as we'll see, each one carries it's own messy obstacles.

If it was easy to go All IN, everyone would do it, right?

I'm praying that over the next 7 weeks all of us will discover that there are many things that are messy, but are worth it, and that we'll find ourselves going ALL IN on them.

Today, we start with prayer.

How do we know? Jesus said it clearly in Luke 18:1 / "to always pray and not give up"

So, when we finish today, you and I should be motivated to do 2 things: pray, and keep praying

To help us, let's read [Luke 18:1-8](#) and highlight some truths from the parable that can help us do that.

1. No can be normal

- a. I'd like us to not miss this, and yet so many have
- b. We have failed for the lie that prayer is easy if we really love Jesus
- c. But look at [Colossians 4:12](#) / Epaphras WRESTLED in prayer
- d. I wrestled once in my life - once!
- e. I basically laid on the mat and prayed for the ref to count me out because I couldn't breathe
- f. Prayer isn't easy; it's hard and it can be messy, especially when we don't get an answer
- g. Jesus said the point of the parable was that we would pray and not give up
- h. Why would He say that? Because He knows that we're going to want to give up!
- i. So in order for us to not give up when it seems like nothing is happening, Jesus tells us a parable to prepare us for nothing to happen
- j. Sounds confusing, I know, but in prayer, sometimes nothing is normal
 - [1 Kings 18:43-44](#) / 7 times Elijah sent his servant to look for a cloud / 6 no's before the 1 yes
 - [Daniel 10:12-13](#) / 21 days in prayer / 20 days of nothing before the 21st day changed everything
 - Here, in Luke 18, a widow whose cries for justice were met with the sound of crickets
- k. Jesus is saying, don't panic or stop believing just because you hit some resistance
- l. **There will always be a way out when we make the decision to go all in**
- m. In prayer, the potential way out is the silence of no response and the question is, "What will we do then?"

2. Moving past the no must become the new normal

- a. The widow knocked and nothing happened.
- b. Maybe you've prayed and nothing has happened.

- c. Hear the words of Jesus again and go ALL IN on prayer - “always pray and never give up!!”
- d. We’re good at praying to the no.
- e. Now we need to become good at praying through the no.
- f. What if Elijah had stopped after the 6th no?
- g. What if Daniel had stopped praying on Day 20?
- h. What if this widow walked away after the first few knock?
- i. Again, Jesus anticipated the obstacles and wants us to, as well
- j. The no isn’t an out, it’s an opportunity to stay in
- k. The question is, how?

3. Faith can turn the no into a yes

- a. We know that Jesus told this parable to His followers (that’s us, too!) so that we’d pray and not give up.
- b. What keeps us from giving up? Faith.
- c. Faith is what Jesus is looking for, and we know that because He asked about it in verse 8 - “will He find faith on the earth?”
- d. A lot of people can pray to the no, but not many can pray through the no.
- e. Faith helps us pray through the no because we are convinced that God is moving even if we can’t see it
- f. If this unjust judge would move, Jesus said, HOW MUCH MORE will our just Father in heaven move?
- g. Faith believes that God hears, and so faith asks.
- h. **1 John 5:14-15** / we know that He hears and so we ask
- i. **Luke 11:9-10** / Ask (keep on asking), seek (keep on seeking), knock (keep on knocking) and you WILL...
- j. Our faith isn’t in the receiving (we know from Hebrews 11 that some didn’t receive but they were still included in the great faith chapter!), but in the boldness to ask and believe that no matter how long we ask, the door will open.
- k. **Sometimes prayer leads us to a no, but faith will always take us through a no.**

The Landing

What have you been praying for? A loved on who needs Jesus? Physical healing? Peace?

What has made you stop praying? The fear that you aren’t heard? The silence? The no?

We know that this will be a year of miracles and of more here at The Gathering and that means that we’re going to need to go ALL IN and stay ALL IN on prayer.

The no can’t be the end - it must be the motivation to keep on believing that God hears and will act.

Ask, seek, knock.

It WILL be given to you.

Let’s pray.