

NEVER SAY NEVER

“A shipwrecked man managed to reach an uninhabited island. There, to protect himself against the elements and to safeguard the few possessions he had salvaged, he painstakingly built a little hut from which he constantly and prayerfully scanned the horizon for the approach of a ship. Returning one evening after a search for food, he was horrified to find the hut completely enveloped in flames. Yet by divine mercy this hard affliction was changed into a mighty victory. Early the following morning he awoke to find a ship anchored off the island. When the captain stepped ashore, he explained, “We saw your smoke signal and came.” The moral of the story is, “Never say never to God.” God will make a way even when there is no way!

In Luke 22:33-34 we find that Peter had forgotten the “never say never” principle in life. ***But Peter said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.” Then Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.”*** When Peter hears this prediction he, in typical Peter style, boasts of his love and devotion to the Lord. He vows to go to prison or even to death to prove his allegiance to Jesus. No one in this room is above falling into the same snare of the enemy. Only when you are being sifted like wheat can you know exactly what you will do! It is a dangerous thing to rely upon yourself and your ability to withstand temptation and testing (1 Corinthians 10:12). We've all seen someone act in certain ways and we have said, “I would never do that!” But very be careful - never say never! Often, you are weakest in the area of your greatest strength! That may sound like a contradiction or a paradox, but it is true nonetheless! When you think you have an area of your life absolutely conquered, you will tend to let your guard down and that's when the enemy targets you for sifting.

There is a saying that goes like this: "The bigger they are, the harder they fall." That truth applies to trees and it applies to Christians too! A lot of people are like those big trees in the forest. They like to think that they have made great strides in their walk of faith. They would not want to admit it, but they often judge others by measuring their lives against the life they live. They look at others and see the things they do, the places they go and we hear the things they say. Looking at them, they say, "I would never do that!" Yes, they may not own up to it, but they think there is something special about them, and often act as if they really believe that they are the true 'standard' of faith. The problem is this: Like the trees I mentioned before, they are not strong on the inside! They are just not what they think we are, and this opens them up to attack from the devil. This allows the devil to sift them like wheat.

On a more positive note... Never say never to God! God is not finished with you and He definitely isn't finished with your situation! Never give up on God because He will never give up on you. No matter what you've done, or what your circumstances are, never say never to God. On October 29, 1941, Winston Churchill visited Harrow School to hear the traditional songs he had sung there as a youth, as well as to speak to the students. In his speech he made the following statement: *"Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never - in nothing, great or small, large or petty - never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."* Likewise, never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy because God will show up, on time, every time and He will come through for you. Having said that, however, have you ever felt like God waited too long to answer your prayer and maybe now it's too late? When you started praying your faith was strong and you had no doubt that God could would come through for you, but delays have been chipping away at your confidence.

Now it looks like it is impossible and you resign yourself to the thought that what you asked for must not have been God's will. You start to think that maybe you were asking amiss, maybe you didn't have enough faith, or maybe God is punishing you for some transgression, but for whatever reason, now it looks like it's too late for God to answer your prayer. As we like to say, God is an on time God. He's never too early and He's never too late. So don't you ever give up on God and don't let time rob you of your confidence in Him to come through 'on time' for you.

If you are in that situation, here are two things to consider: First, even when you don't understand what God is doing, He is still worthy of our praise. Even when it looks like God isn't responding to our prayers, we need to keep serving God, keep worshipping and praising God, and keep coming to the house of God. Second, there will come a time in all of our lives when a "now I lay me down to sleep" prayer just isn't going to cut it. There will be those times and places when we need to light a fire under those prayers, when we need to bring some passion and power to the prayer. There are times when we need to get serious, have a prayer revival and get anointed in the prayer closet.

I think of Hannah in the Old Testament praying for God to give her a child. She didn't pray out loud in the Tabernacle, but the movement of her lips and her mannerisms indicate that she prayed with such persistence and passion until the priest, Eli, thought she was drunk. Nine months later her barrenness was broken by the blessing of the birth of Samuel. Sometimes we need to pray with abandon, pray with no holds barred and like the widow knocking on the judge's door for justice over her adversary, we need to importune and passionately persist in prayer.

Maybe you need to light a fire under your prayers. On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit showed up with tongues of fire and about a hundred and twenty people came down from the Upper Room praising God in the Spirit, speaking in other tongues. The people in the streets of Jerusalem thought these followers of Jesus were drunk. No they weren't drunk, they were just fired up. Sometimes we need to revisit those godly dreams and desires and fire up our prayers. The apostle Paul said that when we don't know how to pray as we ought to, the Holy Spirit will pray through us. God is telling someone here today that it's time to fire up your prayers. It's time to let the Spirit pray through you, it's time to pray in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Light some incense, fill the golden bowls of heaven with the prayers of the saints, but whatever you do, don't give up on God. He'll come through for you. Yes, never say never to the Almighty!

It may look like it's too late, but it's just starting to get good. God does His best work when it looks impossible. I don't know what you've been praying for, but I can tell you this, that God has heard your prayer and He will not let you down. It may have looked like it was too late, but God is an on-time God. You may think that it's too late for that prayer that you've been praying, but I encourage you today to bring it out, dust it off one more time, and fire it up. You may give up on man, or give up on the government, or give up on the doctors, but don't you ever give up on God. He has heard your prayers, so hold on, the answer is on the way. God will come through for you.

Never say never to God!