

Sermon Notes on Prayer (4/23/17)

The Parable of the Persistent Widow in Luke 18:1-8 illustrates to us the kind of prayer that Jesus desires to see in his followers. It also is a reminder of God's faithfulness to come to the rescue of his people.



Observations

¹ Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ² He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Grant me justice against my opponent.’ ⁴ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, “Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.” ⁶ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? ⁸ I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Luke 18:1-8, NRSV)

Jesus told his disciples this parable to illustrate their need to pray so that they do not lose heart or fall into sin.

Jesus is teaching us to pray with...

God is not like the unjust judge!
Ephesians 2:4-5 tell us that God is loving and merciful.
We direct our prayers to a loving Father who cares about us.

This parable is addressing the question that the Pharisees posed in Luke 17:20 about the kingdom of God that Christ proclaimed.

Jesus gives us encouragement that he will give us justice. Persecuted Christians throughout history have found encouragement in this parable.

Memory verse: “And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”



Your Notes *what God is saying to you:*

Application *for abundant living:*

This parable presents us with the heart of the widow, who continually pursued justice against her adversary. God will give us justice over our adversary, the devil.

What does your prayer life look like today?

What things hinder you from praying?

Put yourself in the judge's position...In what ways can you be an answer to someone else's prayer?

Further Study *for a deeper understanding:*

Read Luke 11:1-13.

Luke's version of The Lord's Prayer is given to us in this passage.

In what ways does this story compare to the parable of the persistent widow?

What does Jesus say that God will give to us when we ask persistently?

Questions *for Small Group Study:*

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to address God as "Father." How does this term "Father" help or hinder your ability to relate with God?

Do you think of God more like the unjust judge or a loving Father? Why?

Think of a time when you prayed persistently, but God didn't answer your prayer the way you wanted. How did you react? In what ways did you see God's grace despite not getting the answer you wanted to hear?

In what ways could your prayer life be more fulfilling?