

Luke 18:1-8

Last week we heard Jesus giving his followers a great discourse on the Kingdom of God.

1. Beware that you don't miss the kingdom due to deceivers, distractions, or desires.
2. Now in Luke 18, Jesus continues his discourse...notice in verse 1 that there is no scene change, no audience change....
3. So he is continuing his teaching...and it is here in chapter 18 that we learn our number one tactic for resisting the deception of false teachers, the distractions of this life, and the desires of the flesh: Prayer.
4. He is telling his followers that they ought to pray and not lose heart.

READ

There are four things that we need to see in this parable on persistent prayer.

I. The Point of the Parable v1

Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart

The point of this parable is made very clear to us.

1. In the time between the first and second coming we are not to lose heart but rather we are to pray.
2. Before you even get to the parable, the point is here.

What does he mean at all times pray?

1. Always be in the spirit of prayer

- a. He doesn't mean every second of every minute of every hour!
- b. Prayer is not the only thing in the Christian life...but prayer must permeate everything in the Christian life!
- c. We must pray focused prayers...but also be in a spirit of prayer at all times.
- d. When asked how much time he spent in prayer, George Muller's reply was, "*Hours every day. But I live in the spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk and when I lie down and when I arise. And the answers are always coming.*"

2. Pray Persistently

- a. When we ask God for something once, that doesn't mean that we should not ask again.
- b. If we would prevail in prayer for the Kingdom, we must persist. Don't give up!
- c. C.H. Spurgeon said, "*Too many prayers are like boys' runaway knocks, given, and then the giver is away before the door can be opened. O for grace to stand foot to foot with the angel of God, and never, never, never relax our hold; feeling that the cause we plead is one in which we must be successful, for souls depend on it, the glory of God is connected with it, the state of our fellow men is in jeopardy.*"
- d. Gen 32:24-30

3. Pray Frequently

- a. The unjust judge felt as though by her continual coming she would weary him.
- b. She was not only not giving up, but she was coming regularly with her plea.
- c. Ps 55:17 *Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he*

hears my voice.

The Lord knew then that a long time would go by before his return. In the time being, he is saying, don't lose heart...keep praying until the end.

II. The People v2-3

"In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. 3 There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.'

There are 2 primary characters in this parable, both of which would be immediately recognized by the people. Israel was very familiar with both dishonest judges and destitute widows.

1. The Dishonest Judge

- a. Jesus calls this judge an unrighteous judge: literally dishonest, corrupt, unjust.
- b. In his own words, He did not fear God, nor did he respect man.
- c. That word respect literally means in the Greek here to be put to shame.
 1. In other words, this man had no shame before men.
 2. He had no shame, he could not be shamed no matter what he did.
- d. This man is ultimately and finally wicked.
- e. You could not penetrate this man's heart with the law or with man's need.

2. The Destitute Widow

- a. She keeps coming and keeps coming and keeps coming which is our Lord's way of pointing out that she really was in a situation where she had to have what was rightfully her's,
- b. she apparently has no man in her life: The only time a woman would come to court was when there was no man to plead her case.
- c. This woman is alone, she represents the destitute, the powerless, the helpless, the desperate.
- d. She has the leading role in this story...the powerless!

III. The Power v4-5

4 For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'"

What was the power that swayed this unjust, unloving, unconcerned judge?

1. It was not her argument: She makes no argument really.
2. Her words are few: Give me justice against my adversary.

The success of our prayers and petitions does not rest upon the beauty of our words

1. More thees and thous does not make a great prayer and less does not make a bad one.
2. Our success in prayer is not determined our ability to barter with God.
3. The cry of our heart is more powerful than the eloquence or our arguments.
4. *“When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words than thy words without heart.”* John Bunyan

What was the power that swayed this unjust, unloving, unconcerned judge?

1. It was not her merit
2. He does not say, "She has a good case, and I ought to listen to it."
3. No, he was too wicked a man to be moved by her case: no regard for God or man.

What was the power that swayed this unjust, unloving, unconcerned judge? It was her persistence!

1. The reason he responds is due to the regard he has for himself: She will wear me out.
 - a. The Greek word translated “wear me out” is a boxing term and it means to strike someone with a full blow in the eye.
 - b. She is punching me silly day after day after day, she is beating me up.
 - c. This woman is not just troublesome, this woman is painful.
2. You have many other weapons to use with God in prayer, but our Christ tells us not to forget this all-conquering, instrument of persistence.
3. Luke 11:5-13
4. If you are sure it is a right thing for which you are asking, plead now, plead at noon, plead at night, plead on. Never give up.

IV. The Promise v6-8

6 And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge said; 7 now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? 8 I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”

There is a positive promise connected with this parable as well as a negative warning

1. The positive promise is *not* that if you can wear out an unjust human judge, then you may stand a chance of wearing out God so that he helps you just to get you off his back.
 - a. No, it is God’s good pleasure to answer you.
 - b. Luke 12:32 *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*
 - c. But this parable is not just about a promise of answered prayer.
2. It is a promise concerning his second coming: You keep praying and praying and persisting in

prayer and don't lose heart because He's patient concerning His promise.

- a. how we live our lives should all be powerfully influenced by a strong and constant prevailing, persistent prayer that Jesus come.
 - b. And when you pray that way constantly, that defines your life.
3. The Negative Warning: When he comes, will He find this kind of persevering faith? Will He find this kind of persevering prayer?
- a. Jesus is just asking the question that when He does come, given that it's going to be a long time, will there be anybody left persistent like this widow?
 - b. So the implication seems to be: prayer and faith stand and fall together.
 - c. If we lose heart and drift away from prayer, then the Son of man will not find faith in us when he comes.

Conclusion:

Advice on praying...

Gospel somehow???