



WHAT JESUS SAYS ABOUT PRAYER SPRING 2022

Growth Group Curriculum
May 15, 2022 – Luke 18:1-8

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

The gospel of Luke emphasizes the importance of prayer. In Luke 18, Jesus tells two more parables about prayer. The first parable he tells is about a persistent widow who will not give up on pleading her case to a judge. In the telling of the parable Jesus is reminding his disciples that they should continue praying and not give up. There is a connection between prayer and keeping the faith. This is alluded to in verse 8, when Jesus asks the question about whether the Son of Man will find faith on earth when he returns.

The parable introduces us to a judge and a widow. A judge was to be faithful to God and to look out for others. Jesus summarized the greatest commandment by saying we are to love God and neighbor and yet it is obvious that this judge did not care about God or neighbor. The widow represents the “least of these.” Not only is she seen as insignificant, but her lack of standing has also allowed her to be mistreated.

The widow is persistent. She is not going to stop until she is vindicated. She wants justice. She wants the judge to uphold her case and punish the one who is guilty. However, the judge does not seem to care. The widow does not give up. The idea of “being bothered” or “worn out” is literally translated “punched under the eye.” It is a boxing term. The widow is giving the judge black eyes because she refuses to back down.

The parable teaches us that justice will one day be served. Even though the judge is nothing like God there will come a day when God brings his just and righteous reign here on earth. However, until that time comes, people must be persistent in prayer. They are to desperately keep coming to God and praying for His kingdom to come. God will hear the cries of the poor and oppressed and will one day bring justice.

Jesus ends the parable by wondering whether he will find faith when he returns. It is important to remember that when the gospel of Luke was written Jesus had already been gone for over thirty years. Many had expected an immediate return and now it had been thirty plus years. The parable reminds us to keep persevering in prayer. As we pray God transforms our lives and teaches us new things.



Exploring the Text

Luke 18:1-8

18 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ ⁴“For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’” ⁶ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) Can you think of something that happened recently where you persevered in spite of adversity or a lack of progress?
- 2) Why do you think God wants us to persist in prayer? When do you find it most difficult to persist in prayer?
- 3) Can you think of a time when you were focusing your prayers on one thing, and ended up, perhaps through the Holy Spirit’s guidance, praying in a completely different direction?
- 4) How do we carry God’s hope into a world that seems to have so much injustice? Is there a situation in your life where you wish God would bring justice?
- 5) How does your understanding of God’s love and care and concern for humanity inform your prayer life?
- 6) Have you ever had a time in your life where you felt like God was not listening to, nor answering your prayers? How did you deal with that?
- 7) How are faith (verse 8) and prayer connected in this story that Jesus tells?
- 8) Pastor Paul shared the following quote from Soren Kierkegaard about prayer. *“The earthly minded person thinks and imagines that when he prays, the important thing, the thing he must concentrate upon, is that God should hear what he is praying for. And yet in the true, eternal sense it is just the reverse: the true relation in prayer is not when God hears what is prayed for, but when the person praying continues to pray until he is the one who hears, who hears what God is asking for.”* How does this inform your own understanding of prayer?

