

# LEMONADE

## *Persevering Prayer, Luke 18:1-8*

### **Always Pray & Don't Give Up**

- **Luke 18:1-8 (KJV) 1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;**
- In Luke 17 Jesus warns His disciples about the perilous times that will occur before His return
- Jesus then tells a parable to His disciples to help them understand the place of prayer in their lives considering His warnings
- We are living in perilous times right now
  - This pandemic is affecting every aspect of lives now and for the future
- Jesus tells His disciples **they need to always pray and not faint, or lose heart**
- In this one verse Jesus says a lot about prayer:
  - Jesus is speaking to the *people of prayer*, how His disciples *then* and we Christians *now* must be praying people
  - Jesus speaks of the *necessity of prayer*, believers must pray
  - Jesus speaks of the *frequency of prayer*, we are to *always* pray
  - Jesus speaks of the *value and worth of prayer*
  - Jesus is speaking of the *persistence and perseverance* needed in prayer.
- Jesus says we are to pray and not "faint"
- "Fainting" is losing heart, it's giving up, it's throwing the towel
- Why do believers stop praying?
  - We stop praying because of personal doubts, fears, unbelief, impatience, discouragement, distractions, spiritual warfare, and time, etc.
- This is not the time to give up!
  - "Giving up" doesn't produce the answers you need, but *persistence in prayer will pay off!*
- When we *persist* in prayer spiritual growth takes place
- We must *always pray* and *never* give up!

### **The Widow and the Unjust Judge**

**2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.**

- Jesus introduces us to the two main characters in the parable the unjust judge and the widow
- **The judge:**
  - A judge is "expected" to be a person integrity, insight and fairness
  - Not this judge, he didn't reverence God or respect people
  - He was a *circuit judge* that operated out a tent and went from city to city.

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- People with legal issues would come to his tent to have their cases heard.
- The only way some cases could get on the docket and be heard was to “bribe” the judge and this judge seems open to accepting bribes.
- A bribe gave wealthy and influential people “access” to the judge who would then “rule” in their favor
- In the days of the Bible, these kinds of judges were called “robber judges”, they were in it for all they could get for themselves
- **The *widow*:**
  - Widows were some of the most vulnerable people
  - This widow was a target of exploitation because:
    1. She was a *woman* in a male-dominated culture where women were second-class citizens at best
    2. She was a *widow*, she had no male relative to stand with her, speak for her or protect her
    3. She was *poor* because she could not gain access to her late husband’s estate, even though she was entitled to it
  - This widow enters the story with “three strikes” against and her
  - But this widow was no “ordinary” widow; this widow has spunk, attitude, persistence, and a feistiness about her
  - She’s a widow who’s willing to fight for “the justice” that belongs to her
  - This widow is *desperate*
    - Some of the most *persevering* people are “desperate people” because their survival is at stake
  - She believes her case is just and that it *demands* a “hearing” by the judge
  - Although she’s a woman in a male dominated culture, she has no lawyer or male to stand with her, and she’s couldn’t give a bribe even if she wanted, she believes that the judge is going to “hear” her case
  - This widow goes to the judge’s tent and above all the male voices trying to work a deal with the unjust judge, her female voice can be heard, “Avenge me of my adversary”
- On the surface it appears this widow has no chance to have her case heard or ruled in her favor because there was so much working against her

### ***Persistence Pays Off***

***4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.***

- The Bible says the unjust judge refused her; ***for a while***
- But the widow went to the unjust judge again and again, saying, “Avenge me of my adversary”

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- And the judge refused her request over and over again
- Whatever city he was in, the widow would come to his tent with the same request, "Avenge me of my adversary"
- This widow was not going to rest or let the judge rest until he ruled in her favor
- This widow was relentless, it got to the point where the widow had the judge talking to himself, "I know I have no reverence for God and no respect for people, but this widow is working my nerves"
- The widow's persistence wore down the unjust judge

### ***Lessons from the Unjust Judge***

***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.***

- Jesus says there's a lesson to be learned from the unjust judge
- Jesus is saying pay attention to the unjust judge to learn about persistent, persevering, and *faithful* prayer
- Jesus is not ***comparing*** God to the unjust judge, but He is making a ***contrast***
  - God is **not** like the unjust judge; God is completely different
  - God is **not** unjust, God is just, righteous, and holy
  - God does **not** have to be pushed, begged, or bribed to answer our prayers
- We must also remember we are **not** helpless widows with no standing or position with God, but we are God's *chosen ones*
- We are **not** like this widow, she was the object of indifference and contempt, but we are dear *children* of God, we are the apple of God's eye
- We are in a better position than the widow
- As believers, we are God's *chosen people* and He will give us justice
- We can cry out to God day and night because we know His court is *always in session* and God is ready and waiting to hear from us
- When we pray there may be a *delay* between our prayer and the answer
- The delay is not because God is "inactive or insensitive", but God is making *preparations* to answer your prayer ***1 John 5:14-15 (KJV) 14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.***
- You may not see it today or tomorrow, but God will answer your prayer if you don't give up
- God can answer our prayers *now* or in *eternity* and whenever God answers, it will be at "God's speed"

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- God's answers don't always line up with our schedule, but God's answers are always at the *opportune time*

### ***Will Jesus Find Faith When He Returns?***

***8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?***

- Jesus concludes the parable with a question, "*When the Son of Man returns will He find faith on earth?*"
- Before Jesus returns, the days ahead will be filled with challenges, struggles, trials and trouble
- Persevering and persistent prayer *demonstrates* our faith in Jesus
- Without faith, prayer is nothing more than a ritual
- Can Jesus count on you to keep praying and stay faithful until He returns?
- Will you be persistent and faithful in prayer all the way until Jesus returns?
- During this pandemic now and whatever we may face in the future, will God find us praying until Jesus returns?
- Will you keep your petitions before God until He returns?
- Jesus doesn't want us to lose heart, but to faithfully keep praying
- Keep praying because:
  - You know God will answer
  - Nothing is too hard for God
  - God's delays are not God's denials
- Persevere in prayer, your answer is on the way!