

THE BOOK OF LUKE
STUDY TWENTY FOUR (LUKE 18:1-8)
PARABLES FOR THE DISCIPLES
"THE PERSISTENT WIDOW"
JUNE 29, 2008

MEMORY VERSE

Luke 18:1, "And He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart."

INTRODUCTION

The study this week on "The Persistent Widow" (Luke 18:1-8) is also known as the parable of the "Unjust Judge." The primary point of the parable is the importance of persevering prayer. In this parable, Jesus emphasizes to the disciples that they should never lose heart when praying, even when they may not get an immediate answer. God's people are to pray and keep on praying in anticipation of His answer and of Christ's return.

To illustrate this point of persistence, Jesus tells the story of an unjust judge and a poor widow. The judge was unjust, had no fear of God and could care less about what other men thought and said about him. He was not concerned about conscience, law, or morality. His focus was to gain wealth, honor and recognition for himself. The heart of the judge was hard and for some time he refused to help the widow. The poor widow was a picture of vulnerability. Her only option was to plead her case for "justice against her adversary" before the judge. The woman knew the reputation of the judge, but continued to go before him day after day and plead for justice. The judge attempted to ignore her for awhile, but grew weary of being bothered day after day. Finally, the judge relented and granted her the justice she desired. In spite of his wrong motive, this unjust judge did the right thing by granting her this request.

After telling the disciples this parable, Jesus then uses the story to contrast the worst in man and the best in God. If unjust judges respond to constant pressure, how much more will a great and loving God respond to our persistent prayers. If we have a personal relationship with Him and know that He loves us, we can believe He will hear our cries for help. Jesus is communicating to us that we should always be diligent in prayer. The parable indicates that we should continually bring our cause before the Lord in prayer. We should always pray and not become weary when an answer is not immediately given. God sees the big picture and what we might see as a delay is actually part of His perfect plan and timing. Remember, that God does not live in the realm of time that we do. 2 Peter 3:8 tells us "with the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day." Jesus tells us to be persistent in our prayers and live for Him day by day in faith. The answer to our prayers may be delayed, but His delays always have a good reason. As we persist in prayer, we grow in character, faith and hope.

LEARNING FROM GOD'S WORD

1. Who are the two main characters in this parable? How would you describe their position and plight in this society? Based on the description of these two, what do we learn about their character?
2. Why does the judge finally give justice to the widow (Luke 18:4-5)? What motivated the judge to address this situation?
3. To encourage His disciples to persevere in prayer, Jesus tells this story of the helpless widow persistently appealing to an unjust, heartless judge. How is God different from this judge (Luke 18:2-6, 8)?
4. What is Jesus attempting to communicate to us concerning our approach to prayer (Matthew 7:7-8; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)? Why is this attitude toward prayer so important in the life of a believer?
5. What did Jesus mean by His question in Luke 18:8, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?"

OUR WALK WITH GOD

1. In this parable, Jesus emphasizes that we are to be persistent in our prayer life and never give up crying out to the Lord. What are some of the reasons people give up on prayer? Have you ever had times when you have given up on prayer? What are some truths you have learned from this study that will help you maintain the right attitudes toward prayer in the future?
2. How can we, as disciples of Christ, show "faith" (Luke 18:8) in God's character while we await Jesus' return? What does this look like in your own life? How is this manifested in the life of the church?
3. Have you ever prayed for something and the answer was "delayed"? In what ways did you see the hand of the Lord in this delay? How was He glorified through this process?

GOING DEEPER

1. Earlier in this study, you were asked to contrast God with the unjust judge. What do the following verses reveal to you about God (Psalm 89:14, 91:9-16, 117:2;; Lamentations 3:22-23; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 4: 8, 16)? Based on these verses, how would you describe God?
2. Read Acts 1:14, 2:42-47, 4:23-31, 6:6-7, 12:12, 13:1-3, 14:23. What do these verses in Acts reveal to you concerning the importance and the results of prayer in the early church? How should this impact the church today?