

Luke 18: 1-8 (ESV) – The Persistent Widow

Main point: Don't give up.

Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: Jesus has been talking with the disciples about the coming of God's kingdom.

Focus of the study:

And [Jesus] told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. ³ And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' ⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" ⁶ And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Questions:

1. *Who are the players in this story?* Two people:
 - a. v. 2: a judge – *described how?* neither feared God nor respected man. So what kind of judge is that? Not a good one ...
 - b. a widow in that city
2. *What is the widow doing? How often? What does she want? What might her situation be?*
 - a. v. 3: "kept coming to him"
 - b. "Give me justice against my adversary"
3. *What does it mean in that society that she's a widow?*
 - a. not a powerful person; no one else on her side, no defender, probably not much money or standing. It's just her and this judge who isn't inclined to be helpful
 - b. What is her only recourse? To keep asking.
4. *What happens with the judge?*
 - a. v. 4: For a while he refuses, can't be bothered (to do his job...)
 - b. "afterwards" – after a while – he starts to feel what? Annoyed!
 - c. So what does he say?
 - i. "Though I neither fear God nor respect man..." – he actually knows this about himself; Jesus repeats it to emphasize his character
 - ii. v. 5: "...yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I'll do what she wants."
 - iii. *What is the judge's reason for finally doing his job and doing the right thing?* Doesn't want to be bothered anymore by her "continual coming"!
5. *What comparison does Jesus then make?*

- a. v. 7: “Will not GOD...” He’s told a story about a judge who is self-serving, doesn’t care about people, doesn’t perform his role, doesn’t use his power to help others. But what is GOD like?
 - i. righteous, loving, caring, powerful, pays attention – the *opposite* of the unrighteous judge.
 - ii. *What does that tell us about God hearing our requests?*
 - 1. He hears; he cares; he answers “speedily” to give them justice
- 6. *How, then, should we pray?*
 - a. consistently
 - b. expectantly
 - c. honestly
- 7. *Do we always get answers to our prayers “speedily”?* No ...
- 8. *What then should we do?*
 - a. Not give up. God is NOT an uncaring judge. He loves us and wants only good for us.
 - b. Keep the faith – do not be discouraged when God’s timing isn’t our timing. Trust in his goodness, and *continue to ask, seek, and knock*.
- 9. Ask for prayer requests for today.
- 10. Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
- 11. End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace