

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 Jesus 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 the judge and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' ⁴ For a while the judge 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 Jesus 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 God delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, God will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Questions:

1. *In this story that Jesus tells his disciples, who are the players? Two people:*
 - a. v. 2: a judge – *how is the judge described?*
 - i. "Neither feared God nor respected man." *So what kind of judge is that? Not a good one ...*
 - ii. *Since the judge has eliminated caring about God or people, who is left that he cares about?*
 1. Himself! Only thinks about what would make his life easier.
 - b. *Who is the second character in this story?*
 - i. a widow in that city
2. *In this story, what is this widow doing? How often? What does she want? What might her situation be?*
 - a. v. 3: "kept coming to the judge"
 - b. "Give me justice against my adversary"
 - i. She has a problem, someone is against her, and she needs help; can't do anything on her own
3. *In ancient cultures (and sometimes even today), what kind of social standing or power would a widow have? Would a widow have a lot of power on her own?*
 - a. No. She's pretty vulnerable, no husband left to protect or care for her.
 - b. 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
 - c. *What is the only thing the widow can do?*
 - i. Keep asking the judge to help her.
4. *What happens with the judge?*
 - a. v. 4: For a while he refuses the widow, can't be bothered (to do his job...)
 - b. "afterwards" – *after a while – he starts to feel what? Annoyed!*

- c. So what does the judge 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?*
 - 1. Doesn’t want to be bothered anymore by her “continual coming”!
 - 2. The judge doesn’t really WANT to help, just wants the widow to go away.
 - 5. *What comparison does Jesus then make in verse 7?*
 - a. v. 7: “Will not GOD give justice?” Jesus has just 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. God hears; God cares; God answers “speedily” to give his people justice
 - 6. *How, then, should we pray?*
 - a. consistently
 - b. expectantly
 - c. honestly
 - d. with FAITH in God’s goodness and care
 - 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. God 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*.
- Ask for any prayer requests for today.
 - Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
 - End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace

Luke 18: 1-8

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