
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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