

THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

(Fifty Days of Prayer for the Coming of the Holy Spirit; Message One)

¹Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ²He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

⁴"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, ⁵yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"

⁶And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

(Luke 18:1-8)

A. What word best describes your relationship with prayer?

1. Guilt: "I already know I don't pray enough"
2. Frustration: "It doesn't seem like it changes anything"
3. Brazen: "It doesn't work for me. it's a waste of time"
4. Embarrassed: "Everyone seems to be a better pray-er than I am"
5. Challenging: "I want to how to pray better"
6. Fantastic: "I can't imagine not praying every day"

B. Most Christians know about prayer, sadly, few actually pray

THE MESSAGE

A. The first main character is a widow

1. Being a widow meant she was poor, unemployable, void of power
2. She is being harassed by a local villain

B. The second main character is an unjust judge

1. He has no fear of God, no moral absolutes, no sense of accounting (scary)
2. He feels free to use and abuse people

C. The widow appears and pleads her case; he throws her out on the streets

D. She puts together a plan: "I'll pester him until he gives me what I need"

THE MORAL

A. It would seem the moral of this story is: "It pays to pester!"

1. The weak, powerless, abandoned widow is like us

2. Meaning, the judge must be God

B. This is a cleverly communicated study in contrasts

1. We are not at all like this widow

- a. We are not forgotten, abandoned, or hopeless
- b. We are children of God - favored, precious
- c. No voice sounds sweeter to God than your voice
- d. You are family - you have direct and immediate access to God

2. Our God is not at all like that Judge

- a. God is righteous, holy, and sympathetic

"Taste and see that the Lord is good." (Psalm 34:8)

"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love..."
(Psalm 103:8)

- b. We don't need to devise a way to pry God's blessings from him

THE MOTIVATION

A. It reminds us God is interested in our prayers because he is interested in us

1. I am his child; I am favored!
2. God reminds us we already have his ear, his heart, and his blessings

B. It reminds us God is not just interested, he is able to answer our prayers

1. He is sovereign God; God can handle whatever we bring
2. He works things out for our good (cf. Romans 8:28)

C. It reminds us God invites us into a relationship – through prayer

"Let your requests be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6)

1. "When Jesus returns will he find faith on earth?" (i.e., will he find his people praying?)
2. Prayer is a sign of our faith
3. May this story motivate you to spend more time with the Father