

PARABLES

THE WIDOW AND THE JUDGE

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Jesus used parables (or stories), in his teaching to connect with people and help them to understand the points he was making. He used situations and characters that his audience could instantly understand and relate to. A common description of a parable is, it is an "earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. "There was a judge in a certain city," he said, "who neither feared God nor cared about people. A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, 'Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.' The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, 'I don't fear God or care about people, but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!' Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?" (Luke 18:1-8, NLT)

THE CHARACTERS

- **The Widow**

According to Jewish Law, widows were to be given special protection under the justice system. (Deuteronomy 10:18, James 1:27). By choosing a widow in this story Jesus knew his audience could relate to this being someone who had little influence or power, and relied on being treated fairly by the Judge.

- **The Judge**

Moses set in place a system of community leaders acting as judge in cases of disputes (Deuteronomy 1:16-17). We see they were meant to act impartially, and hear the cases of both the poor and the rich. They were to treat everyone equally and fairly and remember that judgement ultimately belongs to God.

THE STORY

The Judge was not acting properly in terms of the law as he ignored the widow. He was not a good and upright man. Nevertheless, she persisted in her plea's for justice. Despite the fact that he was clearly unjust and had little regard for the widow, she wears him down with her constant demands for him to take action. Eventually, he gives in and grants her the justice she sought.

The Meaning

Jesus explains that if this uncaring judge in the end gave justice, how much more will a loving God give justice to his people who cry out to him day and night. He encourages us to keep persisting in our prayers, and remain faithful despite our circumstances.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

Keep Persisting In Prayer

We do not always get immediate results when we pray. God is seeking a people who show tenacity and faithfulness to keep praying and calling out to Him (Matthew 7:7-8, Romans 12:12, Ephesians 6:18).

Definition of persistence - To go on resolutely or stubbornly in spite of opposition, importunity or warning. To remain unchanged or fixed in a specified character, condition or position.

God Hears Our Prayers

The Bible assures us that God hears everything we say (Psalm 139:1-4). He wants us to keep connecting with him, and there is no expiry date on our prayers being heard (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

We Need God

The widow in this story was weak, helpless and reliant on the judge to do right by her. We are in that same position, as without God we can do nothing. When we pray we do so from this position of acknowledging our need for God and submit our wills to his (John 15:5).

We Can Fully Trust God

The judge in this story did not do right by the widow until he was forced into it. In contrast God can be fully relied upon. Sometimes his timing and answers may not be what we were expecting, but when we understand him as our loving father we can continue to press in and pray in full assurance (Psalm 37:5). However, we need to ensure that we align ourselves to God's will and ways. When we remain and abide in Christ, we learn to ask for that which is in accordance with his heart (John 15:7, Psalm 37:4).

God is Just

God is a just God. The Bible tells us he shows no partiality or favouritism. He executes Justice in complete consistency and fairness (Colossians 3:25, Psalm 89:4). As humans created in his image, we have an inbuilt sense of justice. However this can be flawed by our weaknesses and lack of understanding. Therefore we should rely on Gods justice to be done in our lives and situations. When we pray we do so in full acknowledgment that Gods justice is perfect.

Keep the Faith

Just as the widow had an adversary, so do we (1 Peter 5:8), we live in a fallen world, which can seem harsh at times. Many people fall away from faith due to the cares of this world (Matthew 13:22). However, we know Jesus has won the victory and is looking for prayer warriors who will keep the faith, and keep pressing through in prayer until he returns (Luke 18:8).

Persistency in prayer is something God is seeking, and when he finds it, he will move on our behalf as a loving Father. We can rest assured God hears our prayers and we can fully trust him. God is looking for a resolute people who will keep strong in our faith despite opposition and keep in mind his return.