

Week 6 – The Parable of Two Prayers (or two “pray-ers” → a Pharisee and a Publican) *Luke 18:9-14*

Context: Another parable! “The Persistent Widow”! (v. 1-8) Also unique to Luke’s Gospel! Also about prayer!

Keys to these TWO linked parables:

- v.1 Need for prayer (especially during sin & temptation) and
- v.9 Don’t trust in yourself (self-righteousness is a spiritual killer!)

The connection? If we are self-righteous then we don’t think we need to repent, so we don’t ask for help! Our prayers become self focussed and we despise others!

1. The Persistent Widow Luke 18:1-8

v. 1 – the PURPOSE of the parable is given! Pray without fainting! Never give up. Be persistent.

Details of Parable

- The judge did not fear God nor regard people
- The widow needed avenging from an adversary
- The judge ignored her for awhile
- Finally he acted – just so that he could get rid of her continual requesting

Recall the Parable of the of the Friend at Midnight – Luke 11. It was all about a desperate request for help when “visited” by temptation and sin! Luke 11:4,5 “Lead me not into temptation” and “Lend me three loaves”.

- Why **3** loaves?
  - Temptation comes in **3** forms → lust of the flesh, the eyes, and pride of life (1 John 2:16)
  - God’s Word (‘bread’) provides **3** antidotes → hope, faith, and love (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Lust of the Flesh → Want it now

Hope → Wait for it

Lust of the Eyes → See only the Present

Faith → See the Future

Pride of Life → It is all about me

Love → It is NOT all about me

Key Points from the Parable of The Persistent Widow

- a. “Always pray and don’t faint” during trials → persistently ask for help!
- b. God will ‘avenge’ you on your worst enemy → temptation, sin & death
- c. Although he ‘bears long with them’ → The solution will not always come right away, so be patient and tireless!

v.5 “weary” = to beat up or pummel! We need to ‘weary’ the flesh (our nature) by consistent and persistent prayer! Only other place this Greek word is used is in 1 Corinthians 9:27 “keep **under** my body...” → I pummel the flesh with the spirit! It will eventually give in!!! (The Unjust Judge is our flesh! We pester it with prayer!!!)

See Galatians 5:16-18 – the ‘flesh’ and the ‘spirit’ are at war!!!

v.7 “...though He bears long with them” 2 Peter 3:9 – God is not willing that any should perish...

God is patient with us – how patient are we?? Do we ‘endure temptation’? (James 1:12) Do we ‘overcome’?

2. Verse 8:

- a. “speedily” = hastily, quickly. It may not happen right away, but when God acts it will be sudden! Like the fulfilling of His Prophetic word (Revelation 1:1; 22:6)
- b. “shall he find faith”... God’s purpose will be worked out – on God’s timeline, not ours – will we be waiting?

Will He find the kind of faith that is still seeking His help in times of need? Have we become too self-reliant, or too self-sufficient? When was the last time you had a desperate need that you could not fulfill yourself and had to throw yourself completely into the hands of God?

God will always respond to genuine need! When we pray for spiritual help and guidance he will ALWAYS respond. If an “unjust Judge” eventually responds to persistent requests, how much MORE our heavenly Father.

### 3. Segue to Parable of Two Prayers (Luke 18:9-14)

v. 9 – the main problem with SELF righteousness is the resultant despising of OTHERS! (Note the necessity to put others DOWN in order to build self UP)

- ‘trusted in self’ → so self-deceived were they that they derided Christ – a perfect man! See also Job 40:8 – is it possible that we think we know better than God?!

- ‘that they were righteous’ → the irony is that if we trust in ourself we will fail, but if we trust in God we will be saved! 2 Cor. 1:9-10 – based on a Roman triumph song of Deliverance!! Also Proverbs 3:5-6

- the 99 sheep, the older brother, the unjust steward, the Rich Man, ..... me? You?

Romans 10:3 – trying to establish your own righteousness means you will miss out on God’s!

v. 10-13 - Two Men – there are ever only two – which one are you??

- Pharisee – prayed with himself!!! It’s all about him! (colour in the I’s) God did not hear! Isaiah 1:15; 58:2; Ezekiel 33:31; Revelation 3:17
- Note how he DESPISED the other man – his own ‘righteousness’ was based on a condemnation of others (v. 11) and a checklist mentality towards service (v. 12) “I’m not as bad as that guy, and I do all these good things...so God has to reward me.” See Romans 14:10 – don’t judge your brother

The seven-word prayer...the importance of confession!! Proverbs 28:13

- ‘Standing afar off’ = humility = gentile = taking the lower seat = Lazarus vs the Rich Man!
- ‘Did not lift up his eyes’ = humility. But we are to lift up our heads (not because of our own righteousness but because of God’s!)

v. 14 Could Jesus be any clearer??? If we justify ourselves God will not! The reversal principle again!!!!

What is our attitude in these matters???

Are we more like the Pharisee or the Publican???

God is NOT impressed with external compliance to ritual if there is no inward sincerity. Cp. Malachi 1:6-8

Lessons:

1. Pray persistently → God will respond to our pleas to be delivered from evil and led from temptation.
2. Do not give into the flesh → pummel it with the spirit!
3. Self-righteousness is a spiritual killer → God is looking for a broken and contrite heart!