

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #227

Jesus' Final Journey to Jerusalem Jesus' Prayer Parable of the Persistent Widow LK 18.1-8

1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they must always keep on praying and never give up in discouragement.

2 He said: *"In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought about him. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept on coming to him with the urgent plea, 'I implore you; give me justice against my adversary.'*

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

6 Then the Lord said, *"I command you to pay close attention to what the unjust judge is saying.*

7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who keep on crying out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I declare to you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly!

"However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Somewhere on the Road to Jerusalem
Timeline	March (Month 38)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	C. Jesus' Final Journey to Jerusalem
Title	5. Jesus' Prayer Parable of the Persistent Widow

COMMENT:

In today's reading Jesus reiterated the essential role of persistence in a life of prayer. Jesus had taught the same lesson with a different parable six months earlier (DJN #175; LK 11.5-13). He intended both parables to buttress a bulldog-like tenacity and persistence in our practice of prayer.

In today's text the attitude of the judge was the opposite of God. The judge had no desire to grant the widow's request. God, on the other hand, has already decided to provide for our needs in answer to our prayers. God is far more committed to answering our prayers than we are devoted to persistence in making our requests.

Jesus' point was that if persistence could win an answer from a wicked judge who has no desire to grant our requests, how much more should we be persistent in making our requests to the God who literally died (in Jesus) so that he could answer our every plea? The goodness and plan of God to answer our prayers makes persistence on our part a no-brainer.

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Luke set up the narrative by emphasizing Jesus' central point at the outset. Jesus then used several points of emphasis in this teaching to underscore the importance of persistence in prayer. He used verb tenses that described the ongoing, consistent way the woman wore down the judge's resistance with her sheer determination not to stop until she received the answer she needed.

Then, Jesus chose to phrase the widow's request to the judge in the command form, which literally meant: "*I command you to give me relief!*" This showed the urgency of her need, and the passionate fire in her determination.

Finally, Jesus tacked on a final, rhetorical question to end the teaching: **"However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"** For Jesus, the Man of Prayer, faith in God is intrinsically linked to persistence in prayer. If we believe in Jesus as the ultimate revelation of the nature of God, we also must believe that he answers prayer, and has chosen to work out his will on this earth through the tenacious prayers of those who believe in him.

Persistence in prayer was the example of Jesus' life—from before he was born, throughout his life and ministry on earth, and in his ongoing work as our eternal High Priest in heaven, who is always interceding for us. He would demonstrate magnificent persistence in prayer in his journey through the cross.

Since prayer is synonymous with Jesus, it must also characterize each of us as his followers. It can be no other way.

APPLICATION:

There are two aspects of persistence in prayer that Jesus had in mind. First is persistence in the practice, or discipline of prayer as a life-style. No matter how inconsistent we have been in prayer in the past, we must not give up on praying today, and tomorrow. As Jesus said, we must NEVER give up on our prayer life.

The second aspect of persistence is in making our requests known. We should continue to bring our specific requests before God, and not give up until we receive the answer that is surely coming.

Lack of persistence means we give up on our request before we receive God's answer. Faithfulness means we keep on waiting for God's answer till it comes. This is often called "praying it through."

Both aspects of persistence are essential in Jesus' prayer-teaching.

How are you doing with them?

Where do you need to redouble your commitment to persistence in prayer today?