

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

Luke 18:1-8

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The need for persistence in prayer is illustrated in the *Parable of the Persistent Widow* as recorded in Luke 18:1-8. Jesus gave this parable to teach His disciples that they should always pray and not give up hope of receiving an answer from God.

Jesus began the parable saying that there was an unrighteous judge who did not fear God, and who had no regard for men. There was a widow who kept coming to this judge, asking for justice against an adversary of hers. The judge at first kept putting her off, but she kept returning to him, persisting with her request. Finally, the unrighteous judge said to himself that he would grant this widow the justice she sought, so that she would not keep troubling him with her continual returning.

Jesus ended the parable with a lesson for His disciples about persistence in prayer when He said: “...Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:6-8).

So in the Parable of the Persistent Widow, (and also in the Parable of a Friend Who Comes at Midnight as recorded in Luke 11:5-10), Jesus taught about

the necessity of persevering in prayer as we bring our requests to God, and He assured us that we will receive God's answer to our prayers. Jesus' final words in the passage are: "However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" This question that Jesus put forth indicates that at times, some of God's answers to our prayers may challenge our faith.

When the answer to our prayer is "no", our faith may indeed be challenged. We may wonder why our God, who can do all things, and who said that He loves His children, will not grant us our request to be freed from some burden that we have brought to Him in prayer.

If God's answer to our prayer is "no", then He calls upon us to submit to His answer as part of His plan for our life, at least for the present time. (Consider Jesus' experience in Gethsemane as recorded in Matthew 26:36-46). If our burden is not lifted, and we find that we must continue to suffer with it for a while longer, then we can take comfort in seeing and understanding the troubles that God has allowed to touch our lives in the light of the teachings we have seen from the Scriptures before.

These teachings reveal to us that a share in the sufferings of Christ will be experienced in the life of every believer. Just as Jesus bore fruit through the sufferings that the Father had ordained for His life, we must all follow Him in that we will bear fruit through sharing in His sufferings, as God has ordained for each of us individually. And the fruit born through these sufferings will achieve for us a share in Christ's eternal glory (John 12:24-26, Mark 10:36-39, Romans 8:17, Psalm 139:16).