

Welcome To Sunday Night Bible Fellowship



"We proclaim Him, warning every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man mature in Christ." Col 1:28

"Pray Often and With Humility"

Luke 18:1-14

October 22, 2023

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- 4 "For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man,
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- This is a continuation of Jesus teaching on the Kingdom of God (vs. 8).
- Jesus is now explaining how we should live until we reach the Kingdom.
- In light of trials, and persecution, and temptations (like in the days of Noah and Lot) we need to pray.
- We need to pray often.

1 Thess 5:17

17 **pray** without ceasing;

Phil 4:6

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by **prayer** and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Col 4:2

2 Devote yourselves to **prayer**, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

• Why do believers stop praying?

3 reasons:

1. Frustration – time involved, not the answer I wanted, etc.
 2. We assume God is not going to answer our prayers.
 3. Lack the "big picture."
- Jesus gives them a parable.
 - Judge – typical judge in that day: 1. No fear of God. 2. No respect for man. He just does his job for himself.
 - **Think about it:** How tough would this judge be?

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"widow" – no husband to help her. All alone. Women lacked power in that culture.

- She comes to this godless, heartless judge for legal protection.
- She has an opponent. She needs help.
- She "keeps coming,"
- Again in vs. 4 his character is emphasized.
- He starts out unwilling to help her – "Don't bother me!"
- But her persistence pays off and he grants her protection/vindication.
- **Note:** It was not his kindness or compassion that moved him, it was her perseverance, determination.
- His decision was all about him and his discomfort.

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- Jesus is saying: "Stop for a minute and think about what the judge said. He granted her request"
- But God is a different kind of judge. He is kind and compassionate toward those who are his chosen ones.
- Unlike the widow who was a stranger to the judge, we are His children.
- These are the ones who in their distress and trials are crying out to Him in their prayers.
- At the coming of Christ, there will be justice, there will be vindication for His elect.
- But will He find those, who through their prayers, are demonstrating their faith?
- Therefore do not grow weary, do not lose heart, pray always.
- Prayer and faith stand and fall together. If you stop praying, your faith will wither. If you pray continually, your faith will be strong and increase.

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- Jesus now tells a second parable which also involves prayer.
- This parable was directed at those who were moral, religious, and self-righteous. They saw others who were not in their elite group with disdain, disrespect, and scorn.
- Of course we know Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees.

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- 2 times a day when the Jews would enter the temple to pray – 9 AM and 3 PM.
- Sacrifices were offered at both services. (Num. 28, Lev. 1). That is significant.
- “Pharisee and Tax collector” – couldn’t be more different.
 - **Pharisee** – most respected, moral, honored person in that society.
 - **Tax collector** – most hated, despised, scum-of-the-earth.
- Though in the same room, they would be far apart.
- They are there to worship and pray.
- **Note:** The Pharisee is praying this to himself. So true! His prayers were at most bouncing off the ceiling of the temple.
- The prayer of the Pharisee is all about himself – “I, I, I, I, I”

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- His self-made religion is all about the “do’s” and the “don’ts.”
- He is playing “spiritual king of the mountain.”
- Notice that he puts the tax collector last, at the bottom, below everyone else.
- Self-righteousness is really ugly.
- Paul in Phil. 3 –

Phil 3:4-8

4 If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;

6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

13 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

- In contrast to the proud Pharisee, we have the humble tax collector.
- He is at a distance.
- He is not worthy to look up to heaven. He senses his guilt and shame. He is corrupt, immoral, dishonest, a swindler, an extortioner.
- In this parable Jesus chose the most “righteous” man and the worst sinner.
- He beats his breast - a symbol of where his corrupt heart is which is sinful, evil.

Matt 15:19-20

19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.

20 "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

- It is his humility, his unworthiness, his wretchedness, that causes him to cry out for mercy - “I need atonement, I need the sacrifices to be applied to me.”

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- What Jesus says here is going to blow some self-righteous, work-righteousness minds.
- Jesus declares here that the worst of sinners, in an instant, in a moment can be made righteous.
- Every man-made religion on this earth, with their proud flesh, despises that statement.
- This why they crucified the Son of God.
- If you exalt yourself now, someday you will be humbled at the GWTJ.
- But if you humble yourself now, someday you will be exalted in heaven, having been justified by His grace.

Application

1. Pray often. Pray for anything and pray for everything. Pray in the morning, pray at noon, and pray in the evening and at all times in between. Don't give up. Christ is coming back. Keep praying.
2. Our "judge" is loving, kind, and compassionate. He will answer, He will vindicate us someday.
3. There is a world of difference between those who are in a self-righteous religion and those who trust in the righteousness of Christ alone.
4. It is the prayer of humility that moves God's heart to save and justify.