

Prayer

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[0 : 00] Learn from the road. This we pray in Christ's name. All men.

Please be seated. Lord and I are having a disagreement. Exiled.

One of the things we do in a worship service together is pray.

In fact, I would trust that most of you, not all of you, one of the things you do on your own day by day is pray.

Yet, within us, individually and corporately, prayer isn't always easy.

[1 : 07] Often it's difficult. Often that difficulty is a matter of some concern to us. But we often feel our weaknesses in prayer.

We often feel the need to know Christ's teaching, Christ's help with prayer. Certainly St. Luke, when he wrote what we would call the third gospel, was very aware of that difficulty with prayer, that need to know the mind of Christ as we come to prayer.

So more than the other three gospels. Luke talks quite a bit about prayer in his gospel. We find recorded in his gospel more of Jesus' teaching about prayer than in any of the others.

So what I'd like us to do this evening is turn to one particular passage from Luke that deals with prayer. Just to take a look at it and learn from it.

It's on page 77 in the New Testament section of those Bibles. And it's Luke chapter 18.

[2 : 27] And as the few Bibles are set up, it's the first paragraph of that chapter. What I'd like you to do is read that paragraph aloud with me.

So could we. And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

He said, in a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, Vindicate me against my adversary. For a while he had been reduced. But afterward he said to himself, Though I neither fear God nor regard man, Yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, Or she will wear me out by her continual cup.

And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge said. And will not God vindicate his elect, Who cry to him day and night?

[3 : 48] Will he delay long over them? I tell you, He will vindicate them steeply. Nevertheless, When the Son of Man comes, Will he find faith on earth?

There we have one parable about prayer. It's a parable that approaches prayer from two points of view.

First, The matter of the practice of prayer. Secondly, Secondly, The closest prayer of the person, The character of God.

I'd like to take us through those two things in that sequence. First of all, Look at what it says about the practice of prayer.

Prayer is a continuous activity. That's what it's getting at, That's the parable of what questions get. And when we use those words, Continuous activity, There are two other words that come to mind.

[5 : 01] Persistence, Habit. Now, Persistence Is not something that's highly valued in our society.

In fact, It's valued so little that I've yet to meet a parent Who prayed for persistence In his or her children.

And they'll pray for lots of other things. Health, Safety, Friends, All sorts of things. As I say, I'm yet to meet a parent.

I wouldn't pray for persistence In their child. I suspect that Because we dislike persistence. We dislike persistence Because we see it as stubbornness.

Someone who's holding to something So strongly That they won't let go of it Regardless of reason. We see persistence as that.

[6 : 13] Or we see persistence as intolerance. Holding to something Regardless of the harm It may be doing To someone else.

Holding to an idea. Despite the fact That that idea Is prejudicial towards others. So we just like to do it.

And yet, Persistence Is one of those gifts Is God Makes a big difference In the person's life. An interesting fact That I had never really thought about Until it was pointed out to me By a friend At the University of Windsor Several years ago That Successful people In our world Are not those Who get the best Marks in high school In fact Are often not Those who get The best marks At a bachelor's degree Level in university By successful I mean People who In the long run Of their life Make the best Contribution To their world To their community Often the people Who Make such Contribution Are really people Who They get Good Solid Grades But they're not The top Grades They work

For those Grades They work hard For those Grades Things don't Come easily Perhaps it's Because Things don't Come easily That they learn Persistence That they learn To work Hard To work Steadily Towards their Goal Whether it's Passing a course Or getting a job Or whatever else It may be As they go through life People to whom It comes easily Often don't Have the persistence To really do Worthwhile Things To their lives When I thought About that I thought Of friends Of mine At my University People to whom Studies KBs Later people We all Enemies

[8 : 57] Because they Seem to do So well With so little Work People do The minute They got Their Walmart Rucking Out into A job Market Looked For a job To get Them The most Money Possible That's where They stayed They felt That they'd Gotten A reward And they Didn't need To work Further I don't Know whether That's True In our Spirit Back Or not It certainly Was It was It See Christ Here It's Amongst Other Things Telling Us That when It comes To prayer Persistence That hard Steady Continuous Working And prayer Is a necessity Further That where You have That sort Of persistence Then you

Have what's Needed To make A habit Possibly Habits I know They can Be Nasty Things Sometimes But habits Can also Be very Good Things A habit Is a good Thing When what It really Is Is a Dedicated And continuous Practice Of some Worthwhile Activity When you Get a Habit Like that That's Something Worth Having That's Something Worth Pressuring That's Something Worth Valuing In someone Else And it's Persistence That makes That sort Of Activity Possible Persistence When it Comes to The habit Continuous Activity Of prayer It's A different Way To approach It But if Prayer Is worth Doing We Really Believe That it's Worth Our Time To Prayer There are People who Don't Believe It We Believe It That prayer Is worth Our Persistence Prayer Is worth Making A habit Now That sort Of idea Of prayer Does run Counter To some Of the Things That Come Across Particularly In Electronic Media About prayer I don't Watch Much So called Religious TV That's This nasty Habit Of being On the TV Set When I'm Supposed To be In church Preserving So I tend To come To church But What Little Of it I've Seed I Found Troubling Because

Often The way I hear Prayer Talked About In those Few Times That I Managed To hear Such Programs On TV Is That Prayer Really Is Something That People Do When They're In A Tough Situation It's If You Like An Emergency Action Of Short Duration There Are Lots Of Testimonies Of People Who If You Listen To Them You Would Swear That Prayer Is Nothing More Than Something You Turn To In A Nasty Situation In That Bad Situation A Little Bit Of Hasty Prayer Is Just What You Need To Get You On Prayer Presented That Way Is Not A Habit Rather It's More Like A Banding

See What Jesus Says Here Prayer Is Something That We Do And Do And Do Prayer Is Something We Don't Give Up On Prayer Is Not Just Something For Hard Times Only Prayer Is Not Just Something That We Do Because When We Do It We So To Speak Get Our Wish Granted Prayer Is Something To Do Because Of What God Is Like What Is God Like God He If All And Because we see one particular attribute of God.

[13 : 56] Goodness. Goodness beyond understanding. And that's important if you're going to take prayer seriously. You see, if God is patricious, what's the point of praying?

If God's forgetful, what's the point of praying? If God is evil, what's the point of praying? It's not going to do either, isn't it?

Now you'll notice that what Jesus has done here is to contrast God with a corrupt magistrate. In fact, the sort of judge he's referring to here is what were known in the time of Jesus as robber judges.

They were a sort of legal official, we call them that. They were so corrupt that they didn't even hear the case until they'd been bribed to hear.

Throughout the Holy Land, they were notorious in the time of Christ. Here we find God contrasted with that sort of corrupt public official.

[15 : 17] You notice what Jesus is saying. He's saying that if such a corrupt judge can be weary into doing what goes against his nature, if he can be weary into doing good when he's not going to get any money for it, that, that, how much more will God, who is a good, loving Father, how much more will he answer our prayers?

How much more will he listen to our prayers? How much more will he?

See, a good parent, particularly with young children, who are always saying, I want this, I want that. A good parent doesn't give a little bit what he or she wants.

It's rather a good parent that gives the child what he or she needs. I'd say that the goodness of God is such that he likes much better than that sort of parent.

God doesn't give us what we want. He gives us what we need. He gives us what's best for us.

[17 : 28] That doesn't mean not to pray. Rather, it means to pour out our hearts to God so that God can, amongst other things, help our hearts and help our minds know what is the best for us.

That's why Jesus says we're not to get discouraged with our prayers. We're not to get tired with our prayers. Because we can count on God to answer.

Not necessarily with what we want, but what is certainly best for us. Best here and now. Best for eternity. Best for eternity. Best for eternity.

A child who doesn't get what he or she wants. They say, I want this. I want that. I want that. He usually gives up asking.

Follow a 3 year old to a store and follow a 10 year old to a store and you'll see the difference. Kids, they completely stop asking.

[18 : 45] No parent in the right mind will value that. Certainly, children learn just to ask less and less and less and to get down to the essential.

Sometimes, some people, there's a tendency to treat prayer like that. Just pray occasionally because the point of God is just going to listen.

But Christ says there is a point. Christ says there is a point just because God is good. There is a point despite the fact that prayer is not dependent upon our wishes being granted.

That isn't why we pray. At least I hope it isn't. We pray because we know God is good. We pray because we know He will touch our heart.

Part of His answer to our prayer is that touching of our heart. That changing of our will. The story I heard a while back, the more I think of it, the more sense it makes to me.

[20 : 04] The story from the good of England late in the last century of the rural parish where a farmer every night after his pre-suffer chores but before his supper.

Ilegar the office was back in the late bikini. Well, it did not believe the Lord did not laugh, that there was another Montana wanted to make a big biblical topic.

He imported our church and Railway at the time. I'm going to make someone ask me.

I'm going to reply that this is the way he described it. I'm just looking up at God.

God looks young. He's looking up at God with his needs, his class, his dreams, his sorrow.

[21 : 12] He knew that God is looking down on him, seeing the hurts, seeing the sorrow, seeing the need, seeing the pain.

See, that's a good picture of prayer from this parable. Prayer is continuous action.

Continuous action of being with God. A continuous action of sharing with God. Because we know that God is good.

To God we love, we serve, and we worship together tonight. Here is our prayer. We are the God.

The actions of what we need. For now and for eternity. For eternity. I invite you.

[22 : 24] Continue with our service. On page four in the booklet. And on page four we find the Creed.

And I invite you to stand. Join with me. For reciting these articles of belief. Citing what we know of God.

We believe in one God. Father and God. We believe in one God. Father and God. May your help.
All the way to your God. May our love. See you from the Todo Mus Shape.
Be worshipping God. Thank you.

Thank you.

[24 : 10] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[26 : 40] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[29 : 10] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.