

# TEACH US TO PRAY

## Week 3 Discussion Questions The Prayer of the Persistent Widow

Luke 18:1-8

### Icebreaker:

Last week we looked at Mary's Magnificat—her song of praise to God during a divine interruption in her life. How have you experienced God's "interruption" in your life this week and what has been your response?

### Read this week's passage (Luke 18:1-8).

What stands out to you from the passage or sermon this week?

What threatens to cause you to lose heart in life lately?

What is the purpose of parables and why does Jesus use them? (Matthew 13:10-16)

Jesus tells us in Matthew 13:10-16 that he uses parables to reveal hidden truths to those whose hearts are receptive to the truth. Parables are metaphors that use common examples that would be relatable to his listener, until it wasn't. Usually, the piece of the parable that caught them off guard was what Jesus was trying to draw attention to. In the parable of the persistent widow, Jesus is using the common scenario to *contrast* the dishonest judge with God as judge.

What are the characteristics of the judge in this passage and what do they highlight about God, the good judge, when compared to his rule?

Doesn't fear God—prideful?

Doesn't respect man—tyrannical and ruthless maybe?

Arrogant leader whose concern is for himself and not his people.

Puts off responsibility.

Jesus comparison of the two has God being the complete opposite of the dishonest judge: God cares about his people, listens to them. He acts quickly to bring about justice.

What is Jesus trying to reveal about himself and his kingdom in the parable of the Persistent Widow?

Jesus appeals to God's character of righteousness and justice to remind us that God is the judge who we know, we have seen his justice and righteousness in the past and we can count on him to continue to be faithful in the future. Jesus' example of the persistent widow also reveals something about our role in the kingdom—persistently seeking God's justice through prayer and relationship. God wants us to come to him continually, and he will answer, not because he is annoyed, but because he cares. Unlike the dishonest judge, God is longsuffering and patient, and he cares for us.

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What does this parable reveal about God's justice and righteousness?

God hears our cries and he intends to deal his justice and righteousness swiftly. He is not aloof or indifferent to our cries—he sees injustice and plans to deal with it. God's righteousness does not stand for injustice.

With all this in mind, how does persistence in prayer keep us from losing heart?

As we've looked at prayer the past few weeks, we've learned that it is more than simply asking God for things. Prayer is a conversation in which we humbly approach God, recalling who he is and what he has done, remembering his faithfulness, and seeking his will. All these things apply to our persistence in prayer about injustice and troubles. When we come to God in prayer over injustice, we do so recalling who he is, what he has done, praising him for his faithfulness. The knowledge that because he has done it before, he can and will deal justice again brings us peace in the midst of troubling times.

## **Read Micah 6:6-8**

With both these passages of Scripture in mind, what should be our response to injustice?

Prayer is not antithetical to action. While we are called to continually come to God with our troubles, we are also his agents in this world. We are in his image, meant to bring his presence to the world as ambassadors. Our prayers and worship mean nothing if we do not also seek to live out God's desires and will in the world.

What does it look like tangibly for you to embody Micah 6:8 in your life, whether this week or going forward?

How can you be an agent of justice to the world? What does it mean for you to be God's ambassador—living out his character, living like Jesus to those around you? Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry, and brought sight to the blind. Jesus brought life—to the full. How do we foster abundance and flourishing in this way to those around us?

## **Application:**

This week, be persistent in prayer over something that grieves you in your life or in the world. Be specific about what you plan to pray for and share it now. Then, each day, take time to pray for God's justice, for changed hearts and lives, and for real opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Come next week, ready to share what you noticed or experienced.