

THE POWER OF PRAYER!

THERE ONCE WAS A CARTOON THAT SHOWED A LITTLE BOY,,, KNEELING BY HIS BED,,, SAYING HIS BEDTIME PRAYERS,,, IT WENT LIKE THIS;

BEING A BIT FRUSTRATED,,, THE LITTLE BOY SAYS” DEAR GOD,,, MY UNCLE JIM,,, STILL DOESN’T HAVE A JOB; MY SISTER,,, STILL DOESN’T HAVE A DATE FOR THE PROM; MY GRANDMA,,, IS STILL FEELING SICK,,, AND I’M TIRED OF PRAYING,,, FOR THIS FAMILY,,, AND STILL,,, NOT SEEING NO RESULTS.

NOW,,, AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER,,, WE’VE ALL PROBABLY,,, FELT THIS WAY,,, REGARDING OUR PRAYERS,,, HAVEN’T WE?

MANY OF US,,, HAVE PROBABLY FELT LIKE WANTING TO QUIT PRAYING,,, AND GIVING UP ON SEEING ANY ANSWER TO OUR PRAYERS AT ALL.

MORE THAN A FEW OF US,,, MAY HAVE STOPPED PRAYING! PERHAPS NOT ALL TOGETHER,,, BUT,,, WE QUIT PRAYING,,, FOR CERTAIN THINGS.

THINGS THAT WERE IMPORTANT TO US,,, LIKE SEEING A LOVED ONE BEING SAVED AND RETURNING TO CHRIST,,, OR,,, SEEING A MARRIAGE RECONCILED A SICK PERSON HEALED,,, *SEEING A MINISTRY,,, LIKE OURS AT ST. BARNABAS,,, BECOME SUCCESSFUL*,,, OR SOME OTHER SEEMINGLY URGENT NEED MET.

WE QUIT PRAYING BECAUSE *OF DISCOURAGEMENT,,, OR DOUBT* ABOUT WETHER OR NOT,, **IT PAYS TO PRAY!**

ALTHOUGH WE’D NEVER VOICE THOSE THOUGHTS OUT LOUD,,, THE IDEA,,, MAY HAVE COME INTO OUR MIND!

JESUS KNEW HIS DISCIPLES WOULD BE TEMPTED TO QUIT PRAYING,,, SO,,, IN TODAYS GOSPEL,,, WE HEAR JESUS GIVE HIS DISCIPLES ENCOURAGEMENT WHEN HE TELLS THEM ABOUT *THE NECESSITY FOR THEM,,, TO PRAY ALWAYS,,, WITHOUT BECOMING WEARY!*

AND FOR US TODAY,, THIS MEANS:

WE SHOULD ALWAYS PRAY,, WITHOUT STOPPING!

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, JESUS WANTS HIS CHURCH TO GROW,, AND,, IF A CHURCH IS TO GROW,, THEN IT MUST FIRST,,

PROPERLY PREPARE TO GROW,,
BEGINNING WITH PERSISTANT PRAYER.

THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE,, THERE IS TESTIMONY,,
THAT PERSISTANT PRAYER,, HAS BEEN OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO GOD'S PEOPLE,, AND SO IT NEEDS TO BE,, IN OUR CHURCH TODAY.

EVEN JESUS,, PRAYED PERSISTANTLY!

ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS CRUCIFIXION,, IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE,, HE Poured OUT HIS HEART TO HIS FATHER. HIS PRAYER WAS SO PERSISTANT AND SO INTENSE,, THAT DROPS OF BLOOD,, LIKE SWEAT,, FORMED ON HIS FOREHEAD.

LIKE JESUS,, WE NEED TO PRAY PERSISTANTLY AND KEEP ON PRAYING,, UNTIL SOMETHING HAPPENS.

HERE'S A LITTLE HUMEROUS STORY THAT I HEARD A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO. I'D LIKE TO TELL IT AGAIN.

IT'S A GOOD THING,, TO PRAY,, WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCES!

ACCORDING TO SOME RECENT POLLS,, PRAYER IS IMPORTANT TO AMERICANS. THEY FOUND:

90% OF AMERICANS PRAY,, AND:

86% SAY THEY BELIEVE IN GOD.

ISN'T IT INTERESTING,, THAT MORE PEOPLE PRAY,, THAN THOSE,, WHO CLAIM TO BELIEVE IN GOD?

83% SAY THAT THEY FAVOR PRAYER IN SCHOOL AND **70%** FAVOR CHRISTIAN PRAYERS SPOKEN IN SCHOOL.

PRAYER,, IS UNDISPUTABLY,, ONE OF THE GREATEST AND UNDER UTILIZED PRIVILEGES THAT WE HAVE AT OUR DISPOSAL.

JESUS KNEW THIS,, AND **THAT'S EXACTLY WHY,, HE TOLD HIS DISCIPLES THE PARABLE,, ABOUT A CERTAIN WIDOW WHO WOULD NOT HAVE GOTTEN JUSTICE,,**

HAD SHE NOT PERSISTED AND JESUS WANTED US TO FOLLOW HER EXAMPLE.

WE ARE GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE AND IT'S AN HONOR,, AND A PRIVILEGE,, THAT WE CAN PRAY,, BUT WE SHOW A SEVERE LACK OF FELLOWSHIP AND LOVE,, WHEN WE NEGLECT PRAYER!

WITHOUT A PROPER PRAYER LIFE,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, OUR FAITH CAN GROW WEARY AND WEAK! SO,, I ENCOURAGE YOU,, TO SET UP A REGULAR MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER TIME,, AND LETS NOT FORGET,, THE HOURS IN BETWEEN.

WE DON'T KNOW WHEN JESUS IS COMING BACK,, NOR DID HIS DISCIPLES,, WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE LIVING IN THE LAST DAYS.

NO ONE KNOWS THE TIME,, NOT EVEN THE SON,, ONLY THE FATHER,, AS SCRIPTURE TELLS US,,

WHEN JESUS WILL RETURN!

SO WE NEED TO BE PERSISTANT IN OUR PRAYER LIFE AS WE KEEP THE LOVING PRESENCE OF CHRIST ALIVE WITHIN OUR HEARTS,, WITH OUR PRAISE,, WORSHIP AND OUR PETITIONS,, UNTIL OUR LORD AND SAVIOR DOES COME AGAIN,, IN POWER AND GLORY.

NO MATTER HOW DISTRESSED YOU MIGHT BE,, HOW HOPELESS YOU MIGHT FEEL,, OR HOW FRUSTRATED YOU MIGHT BE,, ABOUT A PROBLEM IN YOUR LIFE,, THE LORD WANTS YOU TO KNOW THIS:

DON'T GIVE UP,, LOOK UP,, AND KEEP ON PRAYING!

THEN JESUS TOLD THIS PARABLE:

IN A CERTAIN TOWN,, THERE WAS A JUDGE,, WHO NEITHER FEARED GOD,, NOR CARED ABOUT MEN.

HE WAS A; *HARD HEARTED,, JEWISH JUDGE*,, APPOINTED BY THE ROMANS,, IN THE POLITICALLY TURBULANT LAND,, OF JUDEA.

NOW THERE WAS A WIDOW IN THAT TOWN,, WHO KEPT COMING TO HIM WITH A PLEA,, SAYING:

**RENDER A JUST DECISION FOR ME,,,
AGAINST MY ADVERSARY!**

SCRIPTURE DOESN'T TELL US WHO THAT ADVERSARY WAS,,, HOWEVER,,, IN THOSE DAYS,,, IT WASN'T AT ALL UNCOMMON FOR UNSCRUPULOUS MEN TO TRY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WIDOWS. IT'S LIKELY,,, THAT SOMEONE WAS TRYING TO CHEAT HER OUT OF SOME MONEY OR LAND,,, THAT HER HUSBAND HAD LEFT HER.

NOW,,, THIS WIDOW,,, NOT ONLY HAD THE PROBLEM OF BEING A WOMAN,,, BUT SHE WAS ALSO FACING A DISHONEST JUDGE. HE DIDN'T FEAR GOD OR MAN,,, AND HE DIDN'T CARE WHAT ANYONE THOUGHT ABOUT HIM,,, SO,,, IT WAS UNLIKELY,,, THAT HE WAS GOING TO BE SWAYED BY ANY APPEAL TO THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES AND OUR WIDOW HAD NO MONEY TO BRIBE THIS WICKED JUDGE.

SHE COULD HAVE WENT HOME AND COME UP WITH ALL KINDS OF REASONS WHY SHE SHOULD GIVE UP,,, BUT,,, SHE KNEW,,, THAT HER ONLY RECOURSE WAS TO HOUND THIS JUDGE CONSTANTLY,,, UNTIL SHE RECEIVED JUSTICE.

THE ONLY WEAPON SHE HAD WAS HER PERSISTANCE...
AND SHE USED IT TO THE FULLEST! EVERY TIME THE JUDGE LOOKED UP,,, THERE SHE WAS! AND HE'D SAY:

OH,,, NO,,, SHE'S BACK AGAIN!

WON'T SHE EVER LET IT REST & LEAVE ME ALONE?

SO THE JUDGE SAID: EVEN THOUGH I DO NOT FEAR GOD,,, OR MEN,,, I WILL SEE THAT SHE GETS JUSTICE!

JESUS SAID:

PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT THE DISHONEST JUDGE SAYS: WILL NOT GOD THEN SECURE THE RIGHTS OF HIS CHOSEN ONES,,, WHO CALL OUT TO HIM,,, "DAY AND NIGHT"? WILL HE BE SLOW TO ANSWER THEM" I TELL YOU,,, HE WILL SEE TO IT,,, THAT JUSTICE IS DONE FOR THEM SPEDILY.

IN OTHER WORDS: IF AN UNRIGHTEOUS JUDGE CAN BE SWAYED,, TO BRING ABOUT JUSTICE,, FOR A WOMAN HE DOESN'T EVEN CARE ABOUT,, HOW MUCH MORE,, WILL OUR RIGHTEOUS JUDGE,, BRING ABOUT JUSTICE FOR THE PEOPLE,, THAT HE DOES CARE ABOUT?

GOD IS THE ULTIMATE,, UNCONDITIONAL,, LOVING AND COMPASSIONATE FATHER,, WHO PROMISES TO RESPOND TO THE PRAYERS OF YOUR HEART,, “QUICKLY” IN CONTRAST TO THE UNJUST JUDGE.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT OUR DEFINITION OF QUICKLY ISN'T ALWAYS THE SAME AS GODS. FOR US,, QUICKLY COULD MEAN: RIGHT NOW! BUT FOR GOD,, IT COULD MEAN: **NOW,, OR,, WAIT!**

THE LORD WANTS US TO BE PERSISTANT IN OUR PRAYERS,, AND *WHEN HE DOESN'T ANSWER OUR PRAYERS IMMEDIATELY,, HE'S ASKING US,,*

***TO TRUST IN HIM!* AND,,**

DO YOU BELIEVE,, THAT I'M DOING WHAT IS BEST FOR YOU,, IN YOUR LIFE? WILL YOU CONTINUE TO DEPEND ON ME,, EVERY STEP OF THE WAY?

REMEMBER BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, IT'S JESUS,, WHO'S IN CONTROL,, NOT US!

(* HE HAS A PLAN!

(* HE KNOWS,, WHAT YOU NEED,, BETTER THAN YOU DO!

(* HE KNOWS,, WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO BE READY,, FOR HIS ANSWER!

SO,, BE PATIENT,, JESUS WILL HONOR YOUR PATIENCE.

THE PERSISTANT WIDOW,, HAD EVERY REASON TO GIVE UP,, BUT SHE HAD AN EXPECTANT ATTITUDE,, SO,, SHE REMAINED PERSISTANT IN HER EFFORTS. AND JESUS USED HER PERSISTANCE,, TO TEACH US A LESSON ON PRAYER.

**THIS PARABLE CHALLENGES US:
*TO HANG IN THERE,,, TO BE PERSISTANT,,, TO WAIT,,,
FOR GOD'S BLESSING,,, AND TO KEEP ON PRAYING,,,
UNTIL THE SON OF MAN COMES,,, TO BRING JUSTICE
TO ALL.***

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, JESUS IS THE SAVIOR,,, OF
ALL WHO LOOK TO HIM IN PRAYER. I ENCOURAGE
YOU,,, TO TURN YOUR HEART TO HIM IN PRAYER
TODAY.**

**SO,,, IF YOU ARE CONSUMED WITH WORRY,,,
OR ANXIETY,,, ABOUT ANYTHING,,, IN YOUR LIFE?
THEN,,, REMEMBER THESE WORDS OF GOD,,,
BECAUSE,,,THEY ARE FOR YOU:**

***DON'T DISPARE,,, TURN TO PRAYER,,,
DON'T GIVE UP,,, LOOK UP!***

+++AMEN+++

1359 Wds, 6 Pgs