

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
**Des Moines, WA**  
**October 16, 2016**

**Luke 18:1-8**

**Don't Stop Praying**

Hymns: 412— 408 — 409— 413— 407

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. <sup>2</sup> He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. <sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

<sup>4</sup> "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' "

<sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8)

**Don't Stop Praying**

- I. For what you need
  - A. Woman's need
    - 1. Legal problem
    - 2. Widow
    - 3. No money or influence
  - B. Our needs
    - 1. Physical
    - 2. Spiritual
    - 3. Against enemies
    - 4. Personal approach
  - C. "Deliver us from evil"
    - 1. Luther's explanation
    - 2. Blessed end
  - D. Pray because of need and command
- II. In spite of delays
  - A. Delay caused by judge
    - 1. Judge's attitude
    - 2. Finally gave in
  - B. God's delays
    - 1. Yes
    - 2. No
  - 3. Maybe
  - 4. Wait
  - C. Potential prayer stoppers
    - 1. Bad situations
    - 2. Confused life choices
    - 3. Taking too long
  - D. Why pray?
    - 1. God answers "quickly"
    - 2. Rounds out relationship with Him
- III. Because of God's mercy
  - A. Woman satisfied
    - 1. Didn't earn answer
    - 2. No real source of confidence
  - B. Big difference for us
    - 1. God is just (Law)
    - 2. God is just (Gospel)
  - C. Confidence given
    - 1. We don't earn answers
    - 2. God's grace
    - 3. God's past performance

Conclusion

IA1 In the story Jesus told the woman had a need. It was a legal need. We are not told exactly what it might have been. What might it have been? Someone was trying to take advantage of her in some way. Perhaps she had been the victim of fraud. Or she hadn't been paid what was due to her. Or someone had taken what belonged to her. It was something for which she was legally entitled to a proper settlement. The quote is: {3} 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

2 Her problem was multiplied by the fact that she was a widow. No family showed up to help her out. No one went to the judge to support her claim. She seemed all alone with her problem.

3 Besides that we know that at Jesus' time there was general discrimination against the less well off. If you didn't have money to pay the judge, what would happen? The judge would either not listen to your case or would decide against you. There is no indication that this widow was very influential in the community.

B1 Everybody has needs. Name some. Physical needs. Food, drink, clothing, house, a source of income, family, friends, employers, employees, government, good weather, peace, health, education, honor, etc, to quote Luther. We also have things we think we need, which are actually luxuries and not necessities.

2 More important are our spiritual needs. We need God's Word so the Holy Spirit can keep our faith in Jesus as our Savior from sin strong. We need God's Word so the Holy Spirit can help lead us in a lifestyle that is pleasing to God. We need God's help to overcome the attacks which the devil, the sinners around us, and our own sinful selfishness make on us. We need daily forgiveness for the sins which we keep on doing in opposition to God's will.

3 The specific request of the woman in the parable fits with the request in the Lord's Prayer, "Deliver us from evil." Grant me justice against my adversary.' We have needs like that too. We have people who seem to delight in being our enemies. People who take pleasure in doing things either to damage our physical well-being or our spiritual strength.

4 Another parallel between the woman and us is the woman's aloneness when she approached the judge. Prayer is one on one. It is just we and the LORD. It is a personal discussion. Often regarding an individual need.

C1 When we pray, "Deliver us from evil," we are issuing the same request which this woman made. Luther explains that request with these words, "We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil that threatens body and soul, property and reputation. In other words, "Lord, get the person or circumstance that is attacking me off my back."

2 There is another way to get away from the evil. The real deliverance from evil will come when we are taken to be with the LORD. That is our real need. Final deliverance from all evil.

D. Why do we pray? Because we have needs. And because the LORD has told us to come to Him and discuss those needs with Him.

IIA1 The woman not only had a need, she also had a problem. Who was her problem? The judge. He refused to grant her justice. Maybe he didn't give her a trial. Maybe he wouldn't grant her a proper settlement. That didn't seem to be unusual for this particular judge. The quote is: {2} "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought." He refused to apply God's law correctly. He refused to look out for the best interest of the people.

2 Even though he wasn't accustomed to granting justice or doing what was right, in this instance he did. Why? Not because he reformed, but because he didn't want to be bothered by this woman any more. She was really bugging him. After some delay, he acted. The quote is: {4} "Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice."

B1 Another parallel with our prayer life. Delays. Sometimes, but we tend to think on rare occasions, the LORD grants our requests immediately without delay.

2 Other times he says, "No." When God says, "No," we can't accuse Him of not hearing or answering. His answer is "No." The LORD knows what is best for us. He knows that certain requests are based on selfishness. God doesn't condone or enhance selfishness. So, He says, "No." Granting some requests would be detrimental to our relationship with Him. So, He says, "No." Just as the judge in the story before us today did at first.

3 Sometimes God says, "Maybe." We get some indications that things are going to work out as we had requested, but it doesn't become very clear for quite a while. That is like the delay the judge caused for the woman.

4 Sometimes the LORD says, "Wait." He wants us to have what we asked for but there is a better time than the present. Perhaps waiting will help us to develop our talking with the LORD. Perhaps waiting will teach us to depend more on him. Perhaps waiting will result in a stronger trust in Him. "Wait." It is an answer that involves a delay.

C1 The woman didn't give up in spite of the delay caused by the judge. What is Jesus' point in telling this little story? "Be like the woman. Don't stop praying even though you face delays." Sometimes things get so bad in our lives that we say, "What's the use of doing anything? Nothing will turn out all right anyway. Why pray? Things can't get any better." We especially are tempted to say that when God has given us a "No" answer.

2 Sometimes things get so badly mixed up in our lives that we aren't sure whether we are asking for the right thing or not. So, we decide to let God figure it out. We won't say anything.. "Why pray? I might be asking for the wrong thing." That happens when we have received a lot of indications in our lives that God is giving us quite a few "Maybes."

3 Sometimes we have been asking for so long that we just give up. "If God would want me to have what I'm asking for, He would have given it to me long ago." That one shows up after God has said, "Wait" for quite a while.

D1 So, why pray when there are so many delays? Because God has promised to hear and answer. Did you notice according to Jesus when God does that? <sup>8</sup> "I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly." Quickly. Sure doesn't seem that way to us. God sees everything in the light of eternity. What seems like a long time to us in comparison to our few years on earth is a very short time to him. In His view He answers quickly.

2 There is another reason to pray even though there are so many delays. Praying rounds out our relationship with Jesus. He speaks to us in His Word. If we wouldn't speak to Him, that would be a strange relationship indeed. Never speaking to someone with whom we are living all day long who speaks to us a lot. .

IIIA1 Finally the woman get the justice she was looking for. She didn't give the judge the expected bribe. She didn't have any societal influence on him which forced him to give her justice. So, she did not earn the answer she got. She got what she needed because of her persistence. She got what she needed because the judge wanted to get rid of her.

2 If you analyze the situation, she had absolutely no reason to be confident that she was going to get what she needed. Everybody knew what the judge was like. His past behavior gave her no assurance that He would do what was right for her. Yet she came again and again.

B1 Here is the major difference between the woman's situation and ours. She didn't stop requesting even though she knew what the judge was like. Jesus urges us to not stop praying because we know what the LORD is like. We know He is just. We know that He will treat us fairly. God's justice could be a terrifying thing for us. After all, His law demands perfection. His righteousness threatens punishment for failure to produce perfection. Since He is just, He must punish us for our sins. But we know the rest of the story.

2 God had Jesus punished in our place. So, His justice was satisfied. He had God the Son take on Himself our humanity to live as our Replacement perfectly as we are supposed to, so He could cover us with it. So, His justice again was satisfied. Through the good news about Jesus God has brought us into His family. We are special to Him. His children. He is deeply concerned about us. He is the exact opposite of the judge in the story.

C1 It is true. We are like the woman. We don't earn God's answers to our prayers by our repetitious praying, just as she didn't earn the judge's justice. But that is where the comparison stops.

2 We can be absolutely confident that God will answer our prayers because we know God's grace. Because God has filled our lives with the forgiveness, holiness and eternal life that Jesus won by his life, death and resurrection, we can approach God confidently, trusting that He will also give us what we need in our present situations.

3 We can be absolutely confident that God will answer our prayers because we know God's past record of care and concern for His people. He can and does answer prayer.

D Why do we pray? Because the LORD has told us to. Because we have needs. Because it rounds out our relationship with Jesus. And because of God's mercy which leads Him to hear and answer our prayers.