

## Week 2

### Sunday

This is the second week of our series, “Good News.” We are looking at some Good News about prayer. To appreciate the good news, we need to acknowledge a difficult fact of life that we have all experienced: Some prayers work and some prayers don’t. The reasons don’t always seem obvious to us.

We think God is loving and powerful. If God doesn’t come through, we guess he just didn’t want to help us. He has better things to do. Maybe our concerns don’t really matter to him. Maybe he only listens to us if we say the right words or use the right formula. Prayer can feel a little like a crap shoot or a game of roulette or a slot machine or whatever gambling analogy you want to use.

The Good News is that reality is far more dynamic. The Good News is that we can grow in knowledge and understanding of why some prayers work and others don’t. The Good News is that when God doesn’t seem to respond to our prayers, it is not because he doesn’t want to help us and it is not because he doesn’t care about us. There is much more going on. Here is the good news about prayer — when God doesn’t seem to answer, it’s not because he doesn’t care.

Pray today for a deepening knowledge and understanding of how prayer works and who God is.

### Monday

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary.

#### Luke 18:1

Jesus recognizes that at times we will become weary with prayer and tempted to lose heart. He recognizes that sometimes we will not feel like it is worth it to keep praying. Yet, prayer is a necessity. Without prayer, we have no access to God’s power. Without prayer, we are all on our own.

There are two major reasons God may not seem to be responding to our prayers. The first reason is that he is calling us to mature and grow in some way. The second is that his will is being opposed. Here is the good news about prayer — when God doesn’t seem to answer it’s not because he doesn’t care.

Pray today for the grace to not let your disappointments with prayer keep you from praying.

Tuesday

He said, "There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being. And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, 'Render a just decision for me against my adversary.'

Luke 18:2-3

This parable introduces us to two characters. One is a judge. He has a bad character. He does things only for himself. He doesn't care about God or what God thinks of him. There was no point in trying to persuade him with the issues of justice or morality. He doesn't respect human beings or care about their opinions. The second character is a widow. She has some kind of problem or issue and needs the judge to help her, but seemingly has no leverage or ability to get his help. Her situation looks hopeless and totally impossible. She needs the judge's help but he has no interest helping her. She can do nothing to get the judge to help her. Well, not nothing. She decides to keep coming to the judge and keep coming. Every day she goes to the judge and asks him to help her and give a just judgment. She persistently asks for help.

Jesus teaches us to be like the persistent widow in prayer. Keep on asking. Keep on asking. Keep on asking for God to help and to intervene. Where do you need God's help right now? Pray for it and the grace to keep on asking.

Wednesday

For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, 'While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being, because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her lest she finally come and strike me.'" The Lord said, "Pay attention 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?"

Luke 18:4-7

The judge is unwilling to help the widow out for a long time. For a long time, he just ignores her because he doesn't have concern for anyone but himself. However, eventually he changes his mind. He doesn't change his mind because he suddenly cares about God or because he cares what others think of him. He cares about his own self-protection and self-interest. If the widow keeps coming, she will wear him out and knock him down from her constant nagging.

In a parable, someone is usually God and someone is usually us. So, we are like the widow and God is like a dishonest, self-interested judge? Not exactly.

Jesus is not comparing his heavenly Father to the judge. He is contrasting the two. He is saying that even a dishonest judge would come to the aid of a helpless widow if she kept on asking

and kept on asking and kept on asking for help. Jesus encourages us to keep on praying even if our prayer doesn't seem to be working. Why? We are praying to our God who is for us and has our best interest in mind. We are not praying to a dishonest judge but to our heavenly Father who loves us and is for us.

Take a moment to address God as your Father. Pray that you will see him more and more as a loving Father who wants what is best for you. Pray for the grace to believe that God is still good even when he does not seem to be answering your prayers.

Thursday

The Lord 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 will be done for them speedily. Will not God secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night."

Luke 18:5-8

If our prayers are not being answered quickly, there must be a good reason for that. God may be helping you grow up and helping you mature in your faith. It may be that his will is opposed — but it is not because he does not love you.

God has already chosen you. You are chosen, not forsaken, by God. God has already chosen to have a relationship with you. He has not forsaken you but sent his Son into the world to die for you. He already gave his best for you, so why would God hold out on you? Of course, God would not be slow to answer your prayers. Of course, God isn't just messing with you. Of course, he wants to do right by you and have justice done for you. Of course, he cares about your needs. Of course, he cares about your family's needs. Of course, he cares about your health and well-being. Of course, he cares about your financial needs.

Thank God today that he has chosen you. Ask him to meet your greatest need.

Friday

"And I tell you, ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion. If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

Luke 11:9-13

Jesus tells us to ask, seek, and knock for God's grace and intervention in our lives. Everyone who does these things will receive the help of their heavenly Father. Human fathers will give their children what they need. They would not give their children a serpent if they asked for a fish or a scorpion if they asked for an egg. Human fathers are fallen and yet they still meet the needs of their children. They don't trick them when they are in need. How much more will our heavenly Father be quick to meet our needs.

Thank God today that he is your Father. Keep on asking him to meet your needs.

Saturday

**Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**

The LORD's are the earth and its fullness;  
the world and those who dwell in it.  
For he founded it upon the seas  
and established it upon the rivers.

**Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**

Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD?  
or who may stand in his holy place?  
He whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean,  
who desires not what is vain.

**Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**

He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,  
a reward from God his savior.  
Such is the race that seeks for him,  
that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

**Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**

Psalm 24