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Sunday School Lesson

TOPIC:

“Always Pray and Not Faint”

Luke 18:1-8

VERSE DISCOVERY: Luke 18:1-8 (KJV, Public Domain)

Prepare

- Jesus is the main character of this lesson and He is teaching a valuable lesson on persistent prayer especially during difficult times and when we don't see immediate results. Jesus is also teaching in it, the love the Father has for His children. To set the scene of today's lesson, print out or bring up on a computer screen a picture showing Jesus in a teaching setting, possibly with crowds of onlookers listening.
- Today's lesson is called a parable. A parable is a story that Jesus uses to teach something spiritually. Briefly explain parables and note a few for reference if time allows.
- Print out or make several different posters quoting Bible verses on prayer. Post these around your classroom and show the students how much the Bible speaks on the importance of prayer. Ask, *With so many promises about prayer, why do you think people stop or give up on their prayer?* Wait for answers and use it as a lead into today's lesson.

Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 5-12

Dear Friend, God loves you and cares very much for you. Sometimes discouragement may come your way and you just don't know what to do. May I suggest that you pray. I know you've probably heard it all before: Cast your cares upon Him (1 Peter 5:7); Give everything to God in prayer with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6); The prayers of the righteous avails much (James 5:16); Ask, seek, and knock (Matthew 7:7), but each and every one of these promises in God's holy Word is so incredibly true. We really can take God at His Word!

Jesus, in today's lesson, tells a parable not only about persistent prayer, but He tells of God's love for His children. If the unjust judge, as the lesson calls him, was moved to act on behalf of the widow because of her persistence, how much more will God lovingly respond to the cries and pleas of His children?

Friend, whatever it is in life you are dealing with, don't be afraid to approach God in prayer. He loves you more than human words can describe. You may not always receive the answer in the way you imagined or in the time of your choosing, but you will receive what is God's best

according to His good and perfect will. If the unjust judge hears the pleas of a poor widow woman, God, who is always completely just and right, hears you and as the lesson states, “He will avenge them speedily.”

Take God at His Word and let the words of Christ spoken reinvigorate you today.

Activities

- What is one thing you are praying for right now? Write out your prayer under the encouraging verse to keep praying and not to faint on the **Adult Journal Page**. When you pray, hold that verse and your prayer in your heart and be as the widow woman: don’t give up. An alternate exercise would be to fill your journal page with verses that remind you of the power of prayer. **Kids** can write a simple prayer of the heart on their journal page.
- In the **Draw the Scene** section, students can complete the picture with the widow in it by drawing the judge too.
- **Prayer Chain Craft:** Younger students can put together a simple paper chain. On each section of the chain they can write different names or things they would like to remember in prayer. (Also, you can do an online search for the many prayer activities for kids that are out there.)
- Alternate activity sheets such as **Word Search, Crossword, and more** are available on site for those who just want to work with printed materials.

Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: ***“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;” Luke 18:1.***
- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 13)
- **Bible Checkers Review:** This is a game I recently came up with and implemented with my class using the game of checkers. Set up the checkerboard as normal (a dollar store one or a homemade one works just fine, especially if you need multiple boards). Divide the students into teams (depending on the class size). To get the game started, ask different questions regarding the lesson or have students tell you something they learned about the lesson. When the correct answer is given, that team/student can make a move. This gets the game started and some students, depending on how they answer will have more moves than others. As you run out of questions (because checkers can be quite lengthy),

you can let the students finish the game in the regular fashion. I was amazed at how much information was retained by my students when I pulled out the checkerboards.

Life

Are you eager to approach God in prayer? Is it a living lifeline for you? Do you have any qualms about making your request known unto God? Examine your own prayer life through this week. Answer these questions and any others that may be a hindrance to a fruitful prayer life. Journal your discoveries about yourself on a blank journal page provided on site.

Take the time to combat any doubts you may be experiencing dealing with prayer with the Word of God. Find verses that support prayer and its power for your life. Feed off those verses until you feel strengthened and built up from the inside out.

TOPIC:

“Always Pray and Not Faint”

Luke 18:1-9

VERSE DISCOVERY: Luke 18:1-8 (KJV, Public Domain)

Above the door frame of my front door, there is an elongated plaque mounted. Inscribed upon it are the words, “Handle with Prayer.” Every time you come through that door or walk around the living room, this visible reminder stands as a testament of what to do with everything in life: Handle with Prayer.

I believe strongly in prayer and in the power of prayer. And, I believe it is a part of our relationship with God where we can never stop growing in or do too much. I believe prayer is a wonderful privilege that God extends to us to come and talk to Him, to lay everything at His feet. I believe prayer shouldn’t be our last resort when times become difficult. Rather, it should be the first life-saving ring we grab when we are drowning and hold on to it for dear life.

Is it always easy? No. But, then again, neither is life, hence the need for these reminders to take everything to the Lord in prayer before, in the middle of, and after feeling totally overwhelmed by it all.

Prayer is something that should be a natural part of every Christian’s life, but something many use too infrequently or stop when they don’t receive an immediate answer or results they were looking for. What Jesus teaches us in today’s parable is sometimes you must keep going for it. We cannot always expect microwave results. Sometimes we must labor in prayer, and through the power of prayer, repeatedly keep petitioning heaven with those requests.

LESSON SUMMARY

Luke 18:1-3 “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.”

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The operation or workings of prayer have been a mystery to some through the ages. For some prayer seems to be some mundane Christian civic duty; a check off list, if you will, of something that needs to be done. For others, prayer seems to be elusive; difficult to understand the concept of and even more difficult to do.

Good news! Prayer is not either of those things. Prayer is something that is given to us as an honor; as a way to reach the heavenly Father personally, one on one. How awesome is that? Prayer is as essential to the Christian life as breathing or eating. It is necessary to stay spiritually nourished in Him.

Jesus, therefore, sets about in this lesson opening to His disciples the importance of not giving up in prayer. To keep laboring through it and being persistent in our requests to God.

Many today teach that if we keep going to God repeatedly with the same request, then that is a sign that we don't have the proper faith attached to our request, or that we don't believe God. Whereas Jesus teaches us in this lesson, **"men ought always to pray, and not to faint."** And, as we find in our lesson, that also covers when we repeatedly take the same request to Him in prayer.

This was a necessary concept for His disciples to grasp. Jesus had just finished talking to them about His second coming (Luke 17:20-37). Which means, there must be a departure from His first coming, or as we know, His death, resurrection, and ascension.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus spoke of and demonstrated a life of prayer. After His departure, prayer is where the disciples must find strength in the continuing forth of the ministry left for them to fulfill. If Jesus depended often on prayer, surely the disciples, and we, need it even more.

A Christian's lifeline is held open with God through prayer. The opened prayer line fosters that interpersonal relationship between God and man. It is not only life-sustaining, but it's soul-sustaining keeping that glorious love connection betwixt the two opened and flowing. That's what Jesus did, He prayed!

Good, effective prayer is not only active during emergency rescues when we turn to Him as a last resort. A good and effective prayer life will be used to guide our daily steps, saying, "God, I need You and Your counsel and direction in my life this day!"

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A strong life of faith cannot be fostered through just those desperate moment prayer request rescues, but when a life hungers to be connected to its source, it willingly seeks out that Source all the more, because anything less than what that true connection offers just won't do.

Therefore, Jesus Christ Himself said, **“men ought always to pray.”** That word **“always”** tells us there is never a time when it is not a good idea to pray. Prayer is an appropriate action for the Christian to take at all times, or always. The Apostle Paul taught, “Be careful for nothing; but in *every thing* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God,” (Philippians 4:6; emphasis mine). Simply put, and agreeing with our Lord, prayer is something that we should always do, and it is always a good idea.

Prayer will also help us to **“faint not.”** Pray, and don't give up. Pray, and don't let the temporary of this life get the best of you. Victory is ahead for the ones that **“faint not.”**

The word **“faint”** speaks of weariness to the point that it wears you out and you want to let it go. Many of us have often spoken those same words declaring the tiresomeness, annoying, and weakened state one may be feeling over a situation, work, or even just dealing with people.

But, for Jesus' disciples, there would be no room in their new mission for weak-willed, fainthearted workers. The gospel was the mission, and souls would be the target of that mission. Life and death would hang in the balance of those who received the words these men of God would soon proclaim and spread to all regions of the world. They had to be strong. Prayer would help keep them strong; it would help keep them grounded and tied to their Savior in His absence. Prayer can make the difference to a life well-lived for God, or not. Foregoing a persistent prayer life was not an option. With that, Jesus opens this lesson, saying, **“Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”** Never give up on prayer!

Then, as in other parables, Jesus gives them a story of how this may look in their real, everyday lives; an example of how to act out the principle of prayer that Jesus is teaching. This is a sign of a good teacher, of which we know Jesus is. He doesn't just tell people what to do, He shows them how to do it.

With that, He opens his story talking about a **“judge”** who dwells in a certain **“city.”** This judge is later identified by Jesus as being **“unjust”** (see verse 6).

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Unjust means he wasn't right. To prove that, Jesus even stated of this man he **"feared not God, neither regarded man."** He had an, "I don't care" attitude. He did what benefited him, and most likely, his own pockets. A judge of any people, particularly God's people, is supposed to operate with the rule of justice as his measuring rod. He or she is to uphold all that is true and right. They are to be fair and impartial in their decisions. This was not the case here.

Many suppose this man may not have been of Jewish descent because he does not have the fear of God in him, which means he doesn't respect God, he's not going to uphold God's law, nor will he take into consideration God's ways above what he thinks. At the same time, some of the judges/leaders throughout history who were of God's people behaved in the same manner. So, with the information given, we can't say one way or another. But what we do know is God expected more from the judges, especially when it came to helping the weak. In the book of Isaiah, God pronounced a "woe" against unjust judges who, "turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless," (10:2; read 10:1-4).

Nevertheless, whether he was a Jew or a Gentile, he was in a position to help and to judge fairly those who seek his assistance. But, as we find out, this is not what he is in the habit of doing.

The next character in this parable is a **"widow."** Widows got a rough deal in those days and without a husband or children to care for them their situations could turn disastrous quickly. They could become prey for those who would take advantage of them and fall victim to the many schemes of unscrupulous peoples.

God had many stipulations in His Word to guard and benefit the weaker members of society, including the widows. Deuteronomy 27:19 declares, "Cursed be he that perverteth the judgement of the stranger, fatherless, and widow..." Exodus 22:22 says, "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child." And, in the New Testament, James says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world," (1:27).

This **"widow"** came seeking justice. She came because she had a case and apparently, to say that things weren't going right, is an understatement. She had an **"adversary"** to deal

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with and unless she was **“avenged;”** unless someone like this judge would pay attention to her needs and stand up for her cause, she would most likely go under and succumb to the unfair treatment she was receiving. She had nowhere else to go, and so, she wasn’t going anywhere. She refused to accept things as they were.

Luke 18:4-5 “And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.”

“For a while” the judge refused her or turned away any fair judgment she was searching for. **“For a while”** he ignored her pleas and her dire circumstance. **“For a while”** he **“would not”** do anything for her to bring her case to a satisfactory conclusion. But then there came a time when he was ready to move on her behalf.

There was an **“afterward”** moment of revelation for this judge. After he saw her stamina in her **“continual coming.”** After he saw that tenacious spirit in her that refused to let her accept anything less than what she deserves, **“he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her.”**

Not because suddenly he turned his life over to God or got a spiritual revelation. That wasn’t it. Not because he suddenly developed a warm spot in his heart for this woman. That wasn’t it either. His stance in both of those situations had not changed. But, because she wouldn’t be stopped, he was going to take up her case and make sure she received justice and possibly those who had done her wrong would be punished, **“lest by her continual coming she weary me.”**

She wore him out! She came and invaded his space repeatedly with her pleas. However many times it took, she was all in. She came until her request was heard, and her situation was resolved.

How much more will God do for His own who come to Him?

Luke 18:6-8 “And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

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God is not an unjust judge, nor can He be worn out through our prayers. The point of this story is to persist in prayer. If the unjust judge heard the woman and saw to it she was avenged due to her diligence, what do we think about God? Is not God so much more! He said, “He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honour him,” (Psalm 91:15).

Therefore, be diligent. Never let anything hinder one’s pace toward that throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16), especially in those coming days where the need to be fortified in prayer will be all the more prevalent.

Keep coming! Keep going to God! Never stop looking to Him as your source for everything in life. Handle everything with prayer! The widow refused to be silenced, and don’t you be silenced by those around you or your circumstance either.

God has an opened invitation for His people. God shall **“avenge his own elect”** in their time of need, according to His perfect and holy will, and time. There are days now when God’s people are treated unfairly and seem to have drawn the short end of the stick. In the last days, the heat will be turned up all the more, but God is not ignorant now or then to what His people face. He will **“avenge!”** Therefore, keep praying!

Every injustice will be repaid. Every wrong anything done against us will be turned in the favor of God’s people who don’t give up, who keep going despite what it looks like, who hold on to Him and seek Him no matter how hard it may be sometimes. Those who persist in prayer will see a righteous end to everything they are facing.

But one must hold on to faith because faith and persistence go hand in hand. And, faith is what Jesus is questioning at the end of this parable. He says God will do His part. When His people **“cry day and night unto him,”** He hears. Not only does He hear, but He will do something about it. He will **“avenge”** and stand for the justice of His own, and He will do it **“speedily”** without hesitation.

He may not come when you want Him, but as they say, He’s always right on time. He may **“bear long”** with His people (see verses on God’s long-suffering in Ex. 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Isaiah 30:18; Romans 2:4 – just to name a few), but at the right moment, He will answer prayer.

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As God is patient and longsuffering and will come at the right time, we too are commanded to be patient, and in that patience, persist. “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” (James 5:7-8).

Yes, it will be hard sometimes, but persist. Yes, it will seem unfair at times, but persevere. Yes, there will be times when you will be wronged, and it will hurt, but keep going and keep coming to God to seek everything you need.

“Nevertheless,” Jesus asked, **“When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”** Events leading up to that coming day will be times of persecution, to say the least. How will people respond? How will the disciples and us who are attached to the Lord through His blood covenant respond? **“Shall he find faith on the earth?”**

The widow woman was unrelenting in her pursuit of justice. Are we just as unrelenting in our faith? True faith requires commitment, and commitment requires one to persist and not yield to the pressures to give up and throw in the towel.

“Shall he find faith on earth?” As Jesus was preparing His disciple to put their faith into the perspective of hardships they can and will face due to their allegiance to Him, He is also preparing us. Our faith and trust in Him is the key that unlocks the door to victory. “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,” (1 John 5:4). At the same time, our faith and trust in Him should strengthen our stance that we won’t back down from the fight, that we don’t cave due to pressure, and we won’t give in despite the persecutions we may face. We will keep on going! We will keep on praying!

In a previous article, I wrote:

“Jesus questions trust. He questions whether or not anyone will believe in the promise and power of prayer. He questions if there is real, alive faith working in mankind somewhere. He questions.

One’s faith lies at the center of this questioning, for if we really believed wholeheartedly, there would be no hindrance to bring every request and problem before God in

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prayer. This is what Jesus is getting at. True faith unencumbered. True faith that takes the shackles off God's promises and allows one to run freely forth, believing He hears, He knows, and He will answer." (Jesus Questions Trust/WordForLifeSays.com)

To be the men prepared for the mission Jesus has in store for these disciples, their lives must measure up and be able to fully answer this question well. They must be willing to go all in and let nothing stop them from having a powerful prayer life. And, so must we.

CONCLUSION

One day Jesus is coming back. Until then, keep praying and don't give up! Your heavenly Father hears every cry uttered from your lips and spoken silently in your heart. You are loved, my friend. Let your faith rise in your Savior today and believe in His love and power at work in your life. Keep on keeping on. Always pray and not faint!

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TOPIC:

“Always Pray and Not Faint”

Luke 18:1-8

Please Answer the Review Questions Below

1. **T or F.** Prayer should be a natural part of every Christian’s life.
2. “Men ought always to pray, and not to _____.” (Luke 18:1)
A. Curse B. Stop C. Bless D. None
3. What are some of the places in prayer where you need to be like the widow and persist in your request(s) to God?

4. What are some phrases used to describe the bad character of the unjust judge? (Luke 18:2) In contrast, what are some good words we can use to describe the character of God, and how does that help when dealing with our own troubles?

5. “I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she _____ me.” (Luke 18:5)

A. Bothers B. Hindering C. Weary D. None

6. **T or F.** God not only hears, but He acts on behalf of His people. (Luke 18:7)

7. What does it mean to you personally when the Word says, “**He will avenge them speedily**”? How does that help to increase your personal faith? (Luke 18:8)

