



Church of God Sunday School

PARABLES OF JESUS: THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT & THE UNJUST JUDGE

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8

Our lesson begins as Jesus was praying in a "certain place."

This might have been a place where Jesus often prayed. Jesus knew the importance of talking to God.

When Jesus had finished praying, His disciples asked, "Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus answered His disciples by teaching them a model prayer. We are not to pray this prayer exactly, word for word, but this prayer is an example of *how* we should pray.

Jesus told His disciples to pray in this manner: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

This prayer shows whom we are talking to: "Our Father." Then, the prayer shows how sacred and holy God's name is: "Hallowed be thy name." Jesus' prayer also shows that we should tell God our needs—"Give us this day our daily bread"—and we should ask for God's help—"Deliver us from evil."

As He had done many other times, Jesus told His disciples a parable (or a story) to help them understand. Jesus began His story by saying, in so many words, "What if you had a friend come to your house at midnight and ask for three loaves of bread?" This friend said that a visitor had come to his house, and he had nothing to feed his guest.

It was late at night. He could not go out and buy bread for all the shops were closed. What could be done? Somehow he knew his neighbor had bread that he hoped to borrow.

The neighbor was in bed when this knock came on his door. His children were asleep in the same room, and if he got up to answer the door, he might wake up the whole family. It was not convenient. So, he said, "Trouble me not: the door is now shut . . . I cannot rise and give thee."

Did this cause the man outside the house to give up and go home? No. He continued to knock until his neighbor got up and gave him what he needed.

Jesus said that this man received the bread because of his importunity (*im-por-too-ni-tee*). Do you know what "importunity" means? It is to be persistent, to keep asking and not give up.

Jesus told another story about persistent prayer. He wanted His disciples to understand that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint." In this story, Jesus said, "There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man." A widow lived in the same city as this judge. She went to the judge to ask him for help. She said to him, "Avenge me of mine adversary."

Jesus did not tell who was the adversary (enemy) of this widow or what her problem was. We only know that in some way she had been wronged.

At first the judge did not help the widow. Apparently, he was not concerned with her problem. But this did not stop the widow. She continually—over and over—went to the judge, asking for his help.

Finally, the judge said, "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." He only helped the widow because he was getting tired of her constantly coming to him.

Jesus told His disciples to "hear what the unjust judge" said. He wanted them to see that it was the persistent asking of the widow that caused the judge to hear her plea.

How is this story a lesson in prayer? When we have needs and take them to God in prayer, we are not talking to someone like the unjust judge, someone who does not care about us. We are talking to our loving Heavenly Father. He wants to help us. If an unjust judge would answer the pleas of a widow, "how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matthew 7:11).

Both the friend at midnight and the widow were helped because they would not stop asking. Have you ever needed God to answer a prayer for you? Did you ever ask Him one or two times? Did you say a quick

prayer and then forget about it? God might not answer the first time you pray. Should you stop praying?

Jesus said that we should not faint (or give up) when we pray. He told us to ask, seek, and knock. Remember the friend at midnight and the widow. They did not give up and neither should you.

~~~~~  
**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."*

*—Luke 11:9*  
~~~~~

*Use the Memory Verse
to fill in the empty boxes.*

ASK &

SEEK &

KNOCK &

Prayer

When we pray, who are we talking to? Our _____
God's name is _____, which means sacred or holy.
When we pray, we should tell God our _____.
We should also ask for God's _____.
God wants us to pray _____ and not _____ up.

Use These Words:

give
needs
Father
hallowed
help
always

