

THE RED LETTER LECTURES

LEARNING TO PRAY FROM THE WORDS OF JESUS

Boldness In Prayer

I. Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs." — Lk. 11:5-8

A. *friend . . . goes to him at midnight . . .*

1. There's a relationship for such a request at this late hour.
2. The context is an unexpected visitor has arrived. The friend wanting to be a good host needs some help because he's unprepared.

B. *Don't bother me . . .*

1. Homes and villages were small in first century Israel. Probably one room with one mat on the floor for everyone to sleep.
2. There were several good reasons for the neighbor not to want to respond to his friend's request.
3. What's the point of the story and its application to prayer?

NOTES

Prayer Quote: "God does nothing except in response to prayer."
— John Wesley

C. *because of the man's boldness . . .*

1. The word for boldness (importunity (KJV), persistence (NAS), literally means "without shame."
2. It also is has the meaning of recklessness, audacity, shamelessness, insolence.
3. It refers to a disregard of consideration by the one making the request.¹¹
4. The man had a need, his neighbor could meet it, so the time of day was not a consideration.

D. Comparison or contrast?

1. Is Jesus saying that if we continue to pray long enough and bold enough that God will answer reluctantly—like the friend in the story?
2. Or, is Jesus saying that God is not like the reluctant friend but welcomes our bold request under any circumstances?
See Heb. 4:14-16.

E. Paraphrase of Lk. 11:5-8, from *The Message*:

Then he said, "Imagine what would happen if you went to a friend in the middle of the night and said, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread. An old friend traveling through just showed up, and I don't have a thing on hand.' "The friend answers from his bed, 'Don't bother me. The door's locked; my children are all down for the night; I can't get up to give you anything.' "But let me tell you, even if he won't get up because he's a friend, if you stand your ground, knocking and waking all the neighbors, he'll finally get up and get you whatever you need.

NOTES

¹¹ Zodhiates, p. 150.

Heb. 4:14-16: Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (NKJV).

II. Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, 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!' "And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 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? 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?"
— Lk. 18:1-8

A. *Jesus told his disciples a parable . . .*

1. A parable is a figure of speech. Lit., "a placing of one thing beside another.
2. It is generally used of a somewhat lengthy utterance or narrative drawn from nature or human circumstances, the object of which is to set forth a spiritual lesson.¹²

B. *always pray and not give up . . .*

1. Jesus makes it clear as to the purpose of the parable.
2. There are at least twenty-one parables in the NT. Why did Jesus speak in parables? *Read Mt. 13:10-13.*

C. *a judge who neither feared God . . .*

1. The Romans allowed the Jews to manage most of their own affairs and there were village elders who judged both civil and religious matters. *See Dt. 21:18-19.*

NOTES

Prayer Quote: "If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer."
— Martin Luther

¹² Vines, p. 457.

Dt. 21:18-19: If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town.

NOTES

Mt. 22:21: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

2. This judge is described as one who didn't "fear God or care about men." He was called an "unjust judge." Most likely a secular Roman magistrate judge. A representative of Caesar.
3. What was a normal response to his rulings be to a Jew? *See Mt. 22:21.*
4. What is the appropriate Christian response to a secular judge? *Read Rom. 13:1-6.*

D. ***will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones . . .***

1. *Justice* is used 4X in this narrative.
2. "Justice," means to avenge, defend one's cause, maintain one's right.¹³
3. What is the justice spoken of and prayed for in this context?

¹³ Zodhiates, p. 537.

E. Paraphrase of Lk. 18:1-8, from *The Message*:

Jesus told them a story showing that it was necessary for them to pray consistently and never quit. He said, "There was once a judge in some city who never gave God a thought and cared nothing for people. A widow in that city kept after him: 'My rights are being violated. Protect me!' "He never gave her the time of day. But after this went on and on he said to himself, 'I care nothing what God thinks, even less what people think. But because this widow won't quit badgering me, I'd better do something and see that she gets justice—otherwise I'm going to end up beaten black-and-blue by her pounding.'" Then the Master said, "Do you hear what that judge, corrupt as he is, is saying? So what makes you think God won't step in and work justice for his chosen people, who continue to cry out for help? Won't he stick up for them? I assure you, he will. He will not drag his feet. But how much of that kind of persistent faith will the Son of Man find on the earth when he returns?"